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James Burnham

The POLICY of LIBERATION

Aiming to Win

FOR THE UNITED STATES, foreign policy means policy toward world Communism and the Soviet Union. The range of choice is restricted to three possibilities: appeasement, containment, liberation. Other and more elaborate names may be used, but when we strip off the wrapping, we shall find one of just these three.

Besides these three, what policy could there even conceivably be?

.....

This is the last of three penetrating articles by James Burnham, who is one of America's most profound political writers. All three articles are from his book, Containment or Liberation, which will be published by John Day Company in February 1953. The MERCURY regards this book as the most important examination of American foreign policy published since the end of the second World War. Every thoughtful American should read it. Mr. Burnham is also the author of The Coming Defeat of Communism, The Machiavellians, and The Managerial Revolution.

They empty the barrel. Your purpose can be to stand off the Soviet Empire by firmly bottling it up within its present boundaries (whatever these happen to be at the moment). That is: *containment*. You can accept Communism as a legitimate child of human civilization, and therefore wish to bring the Soviet Empire within the family of nations. Because the Soviet imperial state is a totalitarian power which seeks world domination, this is equivalent to accepting the extension of Soviet control. In a word: *appeasement*. You can aim to get rid of Soviet rule, or at least reduce it to a scale which would no longer threaten mankind. That is: *liberation*. You must either hold Soviet power where it is or let it advance or thrust it back.

I am inclined to think that the defenders of containment have sensed the historical vacuum upon which their position has rested. The containment period has brought into a kind of united front two groups with

contrary perspectives which for a few years happened to intersect. One, partly out of ignorance, partly out of softness toward Communism, believes at heart in appeasement. This group regards containment as a maneuver designed, on the one hand, to reach a better spot from which to negotiate with Moscow, and on the other, to quiet the more extreme anti-Soviet feelings at home, which might explode in the face of an open policy of appeasement. I should place in this appeasement wing Dean Acheson and many of those who were closely associated with him in the Department of State.

At the same time, others who went along with the policy of containment, including many among the military and not a few in the less prominent offices of the Department of State itself, looked on containment as a maneuver with a very different motivation. This second group has been by conviction or temperament for liberation, even if the name was not much used. It felt that so positive and sharp a policy as liberation could not be reached in a single jump from the friendly appeasement of wartime and the postwar demobilization. There had to be an intermission during which the nation could reverse the demobilization process, get rid of the ideological hangover from the good-old-Joe days, and encourage its allies. Containment, valueless for

its own sake, was necessary as a bridge to the firm shore of liberation.

WHAT exactly is meant by a policy of liberation? Let me begin an answer by quoting the statement of a Hungarian exile, Francis Honti:

"As is usually the case with émigrés, the political exiles from Central and Eastern Europe are divided upon many issues, but whatever may be our beliefs we nevertheless pursue the same object, that is the liberation of our countries from Soviet domination. The primary condition for such liberation must be to end the Russian occupation, whether direct or indirect. The first form of occupation consists in maintaining on our territories armed forces, professional soldiers and Russian police, while the second is more or less camouflaged though no less oppressive, being carried out through Communist agents and organizations imposed by Moscow and working for her benefit. But liberation will not be effective if we expel only the Russians and their stooges. Since 1945 we have had every reason for not identifying the defeat and departure of the occupants with true liberation, and we have learned from most painful experience that a country is effectively liberated only if it regains its independence. Liberation for us, and for all peoples who wish to live in dignity and enjoy equality of rights, must consist in

the restoration of national independence." *

TO THIS statement it is necessary to make two immediate additions. Mr. Honti seems to interpret "liberation" as if "national liberation" were alone in question. In political weight national liberation is primary, but the policy seeks individual and social liberation as well. Communist imperialism enslaves individuals, classes, religious and other social groups. Liberation therefore includes the goal of freeing the subjects of the Soviet Empire as individuals, as workers, as worshippers, as members of families. If the Soviet subjects achieve liberation, this will mean not only that they have won national freedom but that they will be free from slave camps and the secret police, free to worship God as they see fit, free (if they so choose) to own and cultivate their own land and to work with their own tools, free to make peace with their fellow-men.

Second, liberation applies to the whole Soviet Empire, and is not limited to the regions which were seized at the end of World War II and thereafter. Morally, such a restriction is indefensible. Practically, to make it would promote an irreconcilable hostility between the inhabitants of the original Soviet Union and those of the newly captive nations.

* The Eastern Quarterly, *August-October*, 1952.

There is thus nothing mysterious about the policy of liberation. Its goal is freedom for the peoples and nations now enslaved by the Russian-centered Soviet state system — freedom for all the peoples and nations now under Communist domination, including the Russian people. For the United States to adopt the policy of liberation will mean in the first instance simply that a responsible decision by the government commits the country to that goal. There is no need at the beginning for an official statement of just how the goal will be reached, nor would it be proper at any time for Americans to try to prescribe in detail the political and social arrangements that will replace the Soviet state system.

The policy of liberation will affect all fields of national endeavor — diplomatic, economic, psychological, military. Liberation cannot be a Sunday doctrine, but must inform and guide day by day, routine behavior, as well as the great and special actions. So it has been with containment.

The containment principle is to try to hold the line, but never to aim beyond it. Therefore, under containment, the Korean armistice boundary had to be the 38th Parallel; Chinese Nationalist units from Formosa cannot be permitted to operate on the mainland; the American spokesmen in the United Nations must repudiate the terms of a

law passed by Congress to arm exile military units; the anti-Communist majority of the Albanian populace cannot be rallied to take the rather short jump out of the Soviet Empire; American and Allied negotiators must tamely submit to infamous indignities in the Korean negotiating ritual; American power must sit idly by while American citizens are "brainwashed" by Communist inquisitors; American spokesmen everywhere have got to "avoid provocation," yield the initiative, and stay strictly on the defensive. This is the way it has been and had to be, under the policy of containment.

FOLLOWING the commitment of the United States to the objective, the next act under a policy of liberation will be the communication of the decision to the inhabitants of the Soviet Empire, and to the world at large. The Soviet subjects, and the leaders also, know that the survival of the Soviet system depends in the last analysis on the United States. If the United States acquiesces in the system's permanence, if the policy of containment (which is equivalent to acquiescence) continues or is succeeded by appeasement, then the problem is settled. The remaining opposition will wither, and talk of anti-Communist resistance will become mere provocation. A genuine resistance can develop only out of the conviction that the present state of affairs is temporary, that the sys-

tem will not endure. This conviction must be shared by the masses, not confined to exceptional and perhaps eccentric individuals. Isolated Letts and Kazakhs and Chinese will never shake the Soviet system. The policy of liberation addresses itself to entire nations and peoples: its goal is freedom, not subversion.

Words alone ("propaganda") will not be enough to convince the masses of the American commitment to liberation. This must be daily demonstrated in action. The content of the demonstration will be threefold: all-sided political warfare; auxiliary military and paramilitary actions where called for; adequate preparation for whatever military action may be required in the future. The United States is of course already busy along these three lines. The shift in policy will step up the scale and tempo, particularly of political warfare, and focus all activities both political and military on the objective of liberation.

The outlook of liberation implies that the peoples and nations now subject to Soviet imperial domination are allies of the United States, and not either enemies or mere agents. The adoption of the policy of liberation would demand, therefore, that so far as possible the United States treat them as allies. This means that the United States would consider authentic representatives of these nations as the spokesmen for friendly state powers.

From the point of view of liberation the present Communist governments are not authentic, but are illegitimate usurpers. It follows that wherever there is any plausible basis for doing so, some sort of recognition should be extended to "free" (now necessarily exile) governments or to representative national committees.

The United States, even under the policy of containment, has continued to recognize the free governments of the Baltic nations, and to refuse to give legal acceptance to the incorporation of their territories within the Soviet Empire. The perspective of liberation suggests that this recognition should be taken more seriously, and that in terms of diplomacy and material aid the officials of the free Baltic governments should be treated in the same way as those of other Allied powers.

It would be entirely proper, and legally justified, to withdraw recognition from the puppet Warsaw government of Poland in favor of the Free Polish ("London") government, which has been continuously recognized by a number of countries, including Spain, Lebanon, Portugal, and several South American nations. It goes without saying that under the policy of liberation any idea of recognizing the Chinese Communist government would be dropped.

A nation does not fully exist unless it can defend itself: that is,

unless it has an army. Under the policy of liberation, therefore, an immediate project would be the formation of military units under the flags of the now captive nations. Whether these units ought to be put under NATO command, under the United Nations (as in the Korean command), or attached to the United States Armed Forces is a technical question to be answered in practical terms. The decision to bring them into existence is not technical but political, and of immense importance, above all for its potential effect within the Soviet sphere.

A nation must have trained and loyal citizens to carry on the administrative and professional work which its social existence requires. Since these are being weeded out, corrupted, or destroyed by the Communist regimes at home, at least some individuals—cadres, one might say—must be assembled abroad. This means that institutions such as the modest Free Europe University in Exile should be developed on a large scale, and that the political shackles should be removed from them, so that they will be quite openly preparing men and women to take up the civic responsibilities of their liberated homelands.

THESE ACTIVITIES—political, economic, military, educational—necessarily originate for the time being in the non-Communist world. In all cases, their focus and objective

are inside the Soviet sphere. Geopolitically, they are applications of what I call the East European strategy. It is to be assumed that simultaneously with them the effort will be made to establish liaison with the homelands: through all media of communication and, where possible, directly by courier and in person. What could more enhearten the subject peoples or more dismay their rulers than news of a representative of free Poland sitting in the councils of NATO; free regiments marching under the flags of Rumania, Esthonia, Russia; a free Ukrainian unit capturing a hill in Korea or wiping out one of Ho Chi Minh's detachments in Indochina; a class of a thousand young East Europeans graduating from their free university with degrees in administration, agriculture, and engineering; twenty thousand East European, Chinese, and Russian exiles combining military training with agriculture in North Africa; a NATO destroyer manned by Baltic seamen; free spokesmen of all the captive nations received with honor in Whitehall, the Quai d'Orsay, and the Department of State?

A program of liberation will at once transform the problem of escapees, who have been sitting like undigestible dough on the stomach of the free world. There will be more than enough for escapees to do, in fields calling for a variety of mental, moral, and physical qualifi-

cations. It will become possible to organize a deliberate campaign of escapes, designed to weaken the enemy at critical points, and to fill gaps in our own forces.

The goal of the policy of liberation is to free men from the totalitarian tyranny of Communism. Communist power, and therefore anti-Communist political warfare, operates outside as well as within the Soviet sphere. The liberation perspective suggests that the principal strategic aim in the non-Soviet nations should be the *outlawing* of the Communist enterprise. I use this word in a double sense, meaning: to convince public opinion of the fact that Communism is an intellectual and moral "outlaw" — outside of the permissible boundaries of the civilized community; and, second, to draw the practical conclusion from this by illegalizing and suppressing the organized Communist movement. This strategic aim is implicit in the policy of liberation, both because it is part of the task of freeing men from the Communist conspiracy and also because no nation can stand firm against Soviet pressure, much less fight the Red Army, if it is bled internally by large-scale Communist activity.

THE POLICY OF LIBERATION recognizes the right to self-determination and therefore to independence of all the nations of the Soviet Empire, including the nations lo-

cated within the pre-1939 Soviet boundaries. If liberation actually leads to the fractionalizing of the present Soviet Empire into several dozen wholly independent sovereign and rival states, this will at least remove the intolerable threat to world security which exists because of the control of all central Eurasia by a single aggressive power apparatus. Even such a super-Balkanization would thus be preferable to the present state of affairs, but it would not be occasion for unmixed rejoicing. It would make impossible the efficient economic organization of Central and Eastern Europe. It would keep that area in a permanent state of political instability, with a myriad petty rivalries and conflicts almost certainly leading to war and near-war. In all probability, the independence of the newly freed nations would not last long.

These consequences can be avoided by the voluntary unification, to one or another degree and in one or another form, of Central and Eastern Europe. Far from being contrary to the perspective of liberation, an East European Federation, itself doubtless part of a Federated Europe, is a necessary support of liberation. Liberation, independence, federation: the three are links in the same policy chain.

It would be impossible and improper for the United States government to decide just what peoples and nations would be included

within an East European Federation, just how it would be internally organized, and how related to Western Europe. But to favor the federation principle, and to further it in action, is an essential element of the policy of liberation. Just as propaganda, organization, clandestine operations and all other political warfare activities should proceed *as if* liberation were certain, so should they assume the future federation of the liberated nations. In promoting federation the United States should not hesitate to run, if necessary, counter to the jealousies and ambitions of some of the East Europeans themselves or the preferences of German and Russian chauvinists who may want to keep a soft pillow to punch.

The policy of liberation unavoidably confronts a special problem which is delicate, difficult, and, for Americans, unfamiliar. This problem is sometimes called "the Soviet nationalities question." Let us review its origin.

THE PRE-1939 Soviet Union was not a single nation, but a system of nations in which Russia held a dominant and therefore imperial relation toward the rest. At the same time the Russian people were themselves oppressed by the Communist regime. Though the Russians are the largest national group within the Soviet Union, they are admittedly a minority of the total population.

Exact figures are not available, but out of a Soviet population of roughly 200 million there are about 90 million Russians.

The remaining 110 million are divided into many score nations and ethnic groups. Among the chief of these are: the Ukrainians, with 35-40 million; the Moslem Turkish groups which total in all about 25 million; Byelorussia, with 10 million; various non-Russian Cossack groups, about 10 million; Georgia, more than 3 million; Azerbaijan, about 3 million. Most of these non-Russian nations were conquered by Russia (Muscovy) only in comparatively recent times, and they have never been entirely pacified. They have shared in the world-wide upsurge of national sentiment which has gone on for a hundred and fifty years, and which in the latest period has brought independent existence to India, Indonesia, Eire, Burma, and the Philippines, and has given birth even to such unexpected nations as Israel and Pakistan.

AT THE END of World War I, the major non-Russian nations declared their independence, and fought to keep it until, conquered by the Red Army, they were brought back under the control of a now-Communist Moscow. The three Baltic nations, also numbered by Moscow among the constituent Soviet republics, preserved their independence until 1940.

In 1941, when the Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union, the non-Russian nations again tried to take advantage of the turmoil of war to break away from Moscow. Non-Russian soldiers surrendered by hundreds of thousands, until Nazi behavior, based upon the conception that all East Europeans are sub-human, gradually showed most of them, as it also did those Russians who had surrendered in the hope of escaping Communism, that freedom could not be found through Hitler.

Most Americans and West Europeans use the term "Russian" to refer indiscriminately to any inhabitant of the Soviet Union. Within the Soviet Union, "Russian" means only an ethnic Russian, and the term would not be applied to a Georgian, Chechen, Ukrainian, Kazakh, Uzbek or any of the others. The largest of the non-Russian nations give their names to "republics" of the "Union of Socialist Soviet Republics." There is, of course, no "Soviet language"; each of the nations has its own literature, language, costumes and traditions.

Recognizing the political energy potential of the non-Russian nations, the Kremlin plans its course toward them with great care, and mingles cycles of terror and brutal Russification with interludes of shrewd appeasement and flattery. Not once but several times the entire leading strata of the non-

Russian republics have been purged. Campaigns against Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian or whichever "reactionary chauvinism" are routine performances.

ON THE OTHER TACK, Moscow poses as the preserver of the culture of the non-Russian nations. Though the substance of power is never shared, the lesser nations are granted some of the trappings. Particularly striking was the creation of "foreign offices" for the Ukraine and Byelorussia, and Moscow's insistence — successfully put at Yalta — that both should be given representation in the United Nations. Most commentators explained this by saying that Moscow wanted more votes in the Assembly. This may have been a minor reason — though Moscow has always known that a few votes more or less are of no real importance. The principal motive was undoubtedly to try to give a safe and diverting outlet to the pressure of Ukrainian and Byelorussian nationalism.

For a program of liberation, the Soviet "nationalities question" comes down to this: does the perspective of liberation, independence, and voluntary federation apply only to the nations brought under Soviet rule subsequent to 1939 (the "satellites"), or does it apply also to the nations included within the pre-1939 Soviet Union? On this issue there is bitter conflict among the exile

groups. Most of the Russian exile organizations hold that Russians and non-Russians are oppressed equally by Communism, and that liberation should mean the freeing of all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union, taken collectively, from the Communist tyranny. They say that a program which stresses self-determination and possible independence for the non-Russian nations is "separatism," that the Russian people regard it as "dismemberment" of "their country," and that its effect would be to make the Russians rally around the Communists as the only defenders of the integrity of the fatherland.

Nearly all non-Russian exile groups, including those from the newly captive countries, reject these Russian arguments. They insist that the non-Russian Soviet nations are doubly oppressed, with Communist tyranny added to a Russian imperialism which goes back long before the Communist revolution and has continued without interruption thereafter. In fact, many of them argue that Communism is simply the latest form of Russian imperialism. Liberation must mean the full right of self-determination for the non-Russian nations, including their right to independence and to a settlement of their future relation to Russia as they see fit.

Extremists among the Russian exiles tend toward a neo-Russian (non-Communist) imperialism, and

the extremists of the other side toward a crude anti-Russianism. Both extremes are surely to be avoided, and there is no reason for Americans to plan in full the political reconstruction of Soviet territory following the breakdown of the Soviet regime — a procedure which would be useless as well as absurd. At the same time, some sort of answer to the key problem of principle has got to be given. It affects the day-by-day activities of political warfare as well as preparations for the future.

IF WE ACCEPT the logic of the policy of liberation, we must interpret its goal as applying not only to the post-1939 captives but to all of the constituent nations of the Soviet Union, the non-Russian nations and also Russia. Our proposal must be for the freedom of *all* the nations: a Ukrainian has the same right to freedom as a Pole or a Russian. Only this universal interpretation, which is recommended alike by expediency and justice, will release the centrifugal energy of all the peoples of the Soviet Empire, a power which if given a chance to express itself can shatter the imperial structure. It would be ludicrous to interpret the struggle against Communism as a fight to preserve the Russian Empire. If Russians who claim to be anti-Communists refuse to extend the goal of freedom to non-Russians, then we must wonder whose side

such Russians will be on when a showdown comes.

It may be that exile Russians are right when they say that most Ukrainians, Georgians, Turkomen, and so on regard themselves as little brothers of the Russians and want to remain an integral part of a Russian state purged of Communism. If so, well and good: but let us see. It may also be that the non-Russian exiles are correct in believing that their ethnic countrymen have had enough of Russians, and want to trust their political future to another set of ties: to an East European Federation, a United Europe, a Federation of Moslem Turks, and perhaps other combinations or variants. The policy of liberation assures them only that they have the right to choose. Even an abstractly unwise choice, if made with the spirit of the peoples behind it, will have more probability of bringing peace to those regions than a decision imposed by conquest.

I have repeatedly insisted that the essential element of the policy of liberation is *the commitment to a goal*. It will be wise to join clarity and firmness concerning the goal with much flexibility toward the methods used in its pursuit. History is cunning. We cannot be sure by just what steps or at what pace the Communist yoke can be lifted. Must the complete overthrow of each of the existing governments within the Soviet sphere invariably take place, or can there be new "Titoist" shifts

in which an existing government, if only as a transition move, itself breaks away from Moscow's control? Can the change come more or less peacefully, or must there always be mass violence? Is it conceivable that the Soviet Empire can break up, or begin to break up, without general war? Could a palace revolution some time after the death of Stalin lead to a significant modification of the Soviet system?

We should be modest in attempting to answer such questions ahead of time, and willing to change our answers at the call of new evidence. What we can decide in advance is that we will by our own actions work to strengthen those developments in every field that contribute to the goal of liberation, to the weakening of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet state system.

IHAVE STRESSED the conduct of all-sided political warfare in pursuit of the goal. Is political warfare enough? Can the goal be reached, or at least sufficiently approximated, without shooting and without general nuclear war?

Although only a fool or a liar would guarantee a reply, some partial truths may, however, be stated. First, there will certainly be shooting, as there already and continuously has been. Those who talk about not "provoking" the Soviets are inclined to forget that in Greece, Iran, Malaya, the Philippines, Burma,

India, Berlin, Indochina — and Korea, there have been hundreds of thousands of casualties in the anti-Soviet ranks. These increase to millions if we add, as we should, the victims of the purges and liquidations inside the Soviet Empire.

Whatever the policy, there will continue to be auxiliary military actions of various sorts. Some will be comparable to one or another of those which have already occurred. There may be new kinds: if, for example, the Albanians, aided by exiles and matériel help from abroad, decided to break away from the Soviet orbit; if Chinese Nationalist units from Formosa should be permitted to re-enter the mainland; if a Titoist Polish government asked recognition and protection; or — at a later but not impossible stage — if the people of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, or Bulgaria rose against their Communist masters, and called on the nations of the West to prohibit intervention by the Red Army.

Second, we can conclude from an understanding of the nature of Communism and from a review of Soviet history that the Soviet Union is never in fact provoked. If Moscow wants general war, then general war will begin. Not strength but weakness in the attitude of the enemy is the only factor that might speed its beginning. Moscow has not been ready for general war, and as I write (in the latter part of 1952) there is no indication that she will be in the

near future. Those strong actions that have been taken since 1947 have not brought on general war, though some of them, as in Greece, Korea, and Turkey, have been in themselves undeniably provocative.

Third, the policy of liberation would prove a stronger deterrent to general war than the policy of containment can possibly be. The policy of liberation, insofar as it has any success at all, strikes behind the Soviet front, and throws forces across the Soviet lines of communication. At the same time it arouses what are from the Soviet point of view the most disruptive internal elements. Strategically it is hard to see what could give the Kremlin greater pause.

Fourth, we must understand that in the long run general war, though not inevitable, remains a probability, policy or no policy. Too much is at stake — indeed, the world is at stake — to assume that either side will accept defeat without a total effort to forestall it. The United States, together with whatever allies will join, must therefore prepare for general war. This necessity has no specific relation to the policy of liberation. Under the policy of containment the United States has been preparing for general war, and would have to do so under any conceivable policy except outright capitulation.

POLICIES either of containment or appeasement share a key defect. No matter what can be said for

them during a period of peace or near-peace, they must be dropped on the outbreak of general war. About this there can presumably be no argument. Once general war starts, appeasement no longer has any meaning, and containment would be a direct prescription for defeat. Consequently, the basic policy structure must be overturned. This cannot be done quickly or without loss. Not only nationally but internationally, the prewar policy will have built up established ways of thinking, acting, and feeling, together with a particular estimate of the world situation, the nature of the opponent, and what ought to be done. Then, with the beginning of general war, everyone will be expected to reverse himself abruptly, and to substitute a wholly new pattern of opinion and action.

No such discontinuity need interrupt the development of the policy of liberation. Exactly the same basic policy holds for conditions of peace, limited (cold) war, and general war. The outbreak of general war would in no way affect the substance of the policy, but only its tempo and the detailed mode of its application. This means that everything positive done under the policy of liberation counts, and does not have to be jettisoned at a change in the international weather.

We are for the freedom of the peoples and nations of the Soviet Empire yesterday, today, and to-

tomorrow. In action, we promote the goal of their liberation by the means that are appropriate to the given stage. In peace and semi-peace we deny the permanence of the Soviet tyranny. In full-scale war, our blows aim not at the conquest of territory but at the freeing of men and of nations.

It would be criminal if the policy of liberation were so directed as to arouse premature, narrow uprisings that would lead only to bloody repression and the loss of the most active resistance leaders. At the same time we must ask ourselves: what if, in a captive nation, in a non-Russian Soviet nation or even in Russia itself, a broad mass uprising against the regime began? Or what if one of the Communist governments, supported by the majority of the people, declared against Moscow? And, in either case, what if help were then asked from the free world? Whatever the official policy, will the United States and its allies stand aside while the Red Army and the special troops of the MVD slaughter enough millions to wipe out the challenge not only from those who have come into the open but from any who might dream of freedom in the future? Would not passivity under such circumstances be a final proof of the inevitability of Communist world victory?

To intervene even under those circumstances would not necessarily

mean general war. Intervention in Greece and Korea has not brought general war, nor is there any indication that operations tomorrow on the Chinese mainland would do so. There are many forms of intervention, and many replies — including, of course, retreat. From Moscow's point of view, a mass revolt in part of her Empire, capable of spreading like fire in the dry season, is hardly a happy moment for starting general war. Indeed, it is not certain that Moscow would ever start general and unlimited war. She would do so only if she felt sure of victory. The fact that she has held back up to now proves that she has feared to lose rather than to gain by general war, and that she has felt more confident about the results of other modes of struggle.

FINALLY, we may note that the policy of liberation throws the Soviet Empire on the defensive, and captures the initiative for the free world. The policy of liberation is by its essence offensive, just as containment and appeasement are essentially and unavoidably defensive. This contrast applies in every field, military, economic, political. In the present struggle for the world as in all conflict, the general law applies: only the offensive can win. When we call a policy "offensive," what we are really saying is simply that it aims to win.

Is This The BEAT Generation?

Robert Lowry

THEY STAND three-deep in the midtown Manhattan bars these days, and in the tonier bars in every big city in America — looking studiously unhappy but recently shaved and quite clean. They are all, every suffering, sad-faced one of them, underground men.

They own up to this themselves, with no urging. And they are not even poor but earnest students in the romantic nineteenth century tradition of poor but earnest students; not even bohemians using their souls for punching bags in two-by-four curtainless, carpetless closets and living on what a well-bred rat would disdain; not even threadbare government clerks the way Dos- toyevsky's original model was a government clerk, snarling at his inkwell and coughing in his vodka.

Underground Man Model 1950

Robert Lowry fought with the American Army in Italy in World War II. He is thirty-one years old, and the author of four books of fiction. For a while he tried living in New York City, but he finally gave it up and is now settled in Connecticut. There will be more of Mr. Lowry's work in subsequent issues of this magazine.

wears a tie, buys shoeshines, gets his hair trimmed every ten days, washes his armpits, drinks good liquor, rolls around town in taxicabs, keeps appointments, tends to his business, and makes big dough — enough to be married on (imagine that!), and his wife is pregnant. There is even a chance that the marriage will last. He is serious. And nervous. So nervous that every ten minutes he reaches up and plucks another one of life's goodies and gulps it down. Everything he touches has been cleaned recently by high-priced hired help; everything he looks at has its price, and more often than not he can pay it.

He is twenty-eight or thirty or thirty-two years old — World War II's answer to the Lost Generation. But he is not lost (1925), he is not a Commie (1935), he is not even bitter (1942). He is in the chips (1950) and if this job runs out on him, why, he'll just go and get another: they are findable. Same for the little woman (although as noted above she is pretty well tied up now). He really has nothing to worry about. But listen to him worry. And listen to what he calls himself.

This underground man cannot

quite lay a finger on the reasons for his discontent. He is sure that his opinions are *contra* the world's, but all the boundaries of opinion seem so shifty of late that he has a hard time making up his mind just where he stands. In the twenties the country itself was so wrong with politics, evolution, Sacco, Vanzetti, munitions makers and blue-sky stock that the place to make a stand was obvious: right in the middle of a bathtub full of gin. Ditto for the thirties: the underground man was hungry and he could hate the eaters (and join something and sign something and march against something while carrying something). But dressed up natty, with money in the kick and a baby on the way, where will he make his stand? And what is he going to stand against?

The A bomb? He sold out on that question in 1945 when he felt so good after they told him he wouldn't have to storm Emperor Hirohito's beaches after all. The Horrors and Crudities of Mass Cultural Mediums (radio, TV, movies, bestsellers)? Hell, when he went back to his home-town last summer, even his mother wanted to know more about George Orwell, William Faulkner and Ezra Pound — seems she'd been reading about them in the Luce publications. The Futility of War? The generation that follows him is wearing the helmet now, and with his baby due soon (and his getting older), he probably will never have

to lift a B bag again, given a little luck. Capitalists? Why, the Rockefeller hand out checks to underground men just like himself, so that they can carry on in comfort. All right, then, the Anti-Commie Concentration Camp Law? But it's not underground to be against that. Even Harry T. hates it.

The Hiss affair left him cold: it wasn't his generation on trial. The serialized and anthologized wailings and confessions of the 1935 underground men (they come in various shades of crimson, and are very apologetic), don't move a hair on his head. The machine age seems here to stay (goodbye, Sherwood Anderson) and is paying off in cash even for people who work. For a while after the war, old moss-backed Europe with its wise ways and its willing whores looked like a sturdy stick to shake at the homefolks, but when the 1950 underground man hustled over there a year ago to have another look, he felt homesick. What else, when he spent most of his time answering Frenchmen's questions about Mississippi, and hunting out the black market to buy Chesterfields? Sure, the Colosseum looked as good as ever, but how much finer a structure was it really than the Third Avenue El? Besides, the girls were no longer the adventurous, war-struck daughters of a thousand bourgeois families who six or seven years ago came bouncing out to meet the GI conquerors every time

a new city fell. They were seedier and fewer now, and they produced their health cards as a way of starting a conversation. . . .

The underground man sneaked guilty glances at the starved, dirty hand of Europe that seemed to open before him every time he settled down to a *gelata con panna* in Rome or a pernod in Paris, so he took the boat back home. That reappearing hand made him remember where he could lay one on some ready cash, and here he is now, all dressed up with whole soles on his shoes and a tie around his neck, riding his times and lacking only something to be subversive about.

A damn shame, isn't it? I met one of these guys the other day: his suit bore a Madison Avenue label and his breath cut with a Four Roses edge. He filled the bill so well that his wife was even going to have baby (or maybe she had already delivered; he hardly wanted to talk about it). Anyhow, he was picking up five hundred a month, keeping his hands clean, disdaining both the Greenwich Village neurotics and the uptown successes but shuttling between the two at least three or four times a week, trying to decide to which group he belonged and never able to make up his mind because he really belonged to both, and (he was sure) neither.

I asked him his opinion on something and he said he hesitated to give it because his opinion tended to

conflict with almost everybody else's. "I am something," he said, "of an underground man." He was 30. So I coaxed that underground opinion out of him, and it was my opinion too. It was the opinion of everybody I knew. And I saw myself sitting there in his place; he *was* myself: after all, I had shoes on my feet, meat in the Frigidaire, a baby in the playpen and a pretty wife on the porch. I'd even gone him one better: I already had the house in the country. And I too felt like an underground man, and was disturbed chiefly because I could no longer quite put my finger on my principal secret antagonisms, real though their shadows seemed to be.

A couple of summers ago, in Paris, I ran into an ex-GI who was hiding out from the truth: his war novel, which he had written for the people who used to read *Story* and *The New Anvil*, had turned out to be a big fat bestseller, a book-club selection and all the rage among the over-stuffed reviewers he had always thought he hated. While the royalties and acclaim were pouring in, he huddled in shame in a dark Paris flat, harboring Spanish Republicans and ideas that there had been some terrible mistake. "I think it was just my publisher," he told me lamely. "He took it in his head to make it a bestseller and he spent enough money on advertising to put it over." His only mistake was his

assumption that his opinions could not possibly be popular opinions; that his book (comfortably liberal and no more explosive than the thoughts of ten thousand other ex-GIs) could not possibly appeal to anyone except an underground, die-hard, radical few. The last I heard of him he had reached Hollywood, where he was still working hard at preserving his illusions.

II

How can you be an underground man and hold a majority opinion? How can more than a handful in any given city (even New York) call themselves "underground men?" I've got an answer, underground men: Maybe the failure of every public underground man in the past decade to keep on burrowing has filled great masses of the well-fed American World War II generation with an urge to propagate a great tradition and proclaim themselves subversive (not necessarily politically: morally, emotionally, sexually) even though their very lives proclaim the opposite. All the underground idols have crumbled now; they have all done an about-face; they are against nothing.

Henry Wallace, who was probably wrong, now declares himself wrong — publicly. Hemingway, who hated war (the way I read it), can't say enough nice things about killers, so long as they are professional killers. That mangy, roaring lion of the

Paris urinals, Henry the Horrendous Miller, now believes in God and may even believe in air-conditioning before it's all over. Irwin Shaw hurriedly withdraws *Bury the Dead*, trembling in fear that the wrong people will praise it. John Dos Passos spends his time trying to disillusion readers who believed what he had to say in *USA*.

They all belong in the same zoo now, but even while giving them the old heave-ho into the cages, Model 1950 gets a queasy feeling. Now that Left is Right and Right is Left; now that T. S. Eliot is a *Time* cover boy and many exotic obscurities no longer come out on lavender paper in editions of sixty-nine copies, but sell like hotcakes to the Kansas housewife trade who want to be in the know; now that Jackson Pollock's technicolor spermatozoa get double-page spreads in the million-copy picture magazines and *Nightwood* is a New Directions bestseller and the fashion books feature Isherwood, and the queues of the Socialist experiment look almost (if not quite) as grim as the concentration camps of the Communist experiment; now that Robert Taft votes to cut military expenditures while the drop-the-bomb-on-the-Russians Republican press supports him — I ask you, friend, is it any wonder that Underground Man Model 1950 finds himself embarrassed for a solidly obscure underground opinion, a really radical, rascally attitude that

will knock the Sears, Roebuck socks off the fuddy-duddy old man back in Oswego?

Now for the hopeful note. Maybe, I keep telling myself, it's all for the best. Maybe, amidst all the clamor and the confusion, the neurasthenia, the piles of butchered South Koreans and massacred North Koreans and faceless, footless, shell-blinded GIs, the reactionary liberals and the liberal reactionaries, the Commies who stand for peace and the Catholic Church which stands for peace and General Douglas MacArthur who stands for peace, the young underground men who have found nothing to stand for and the old underground men who have forgotten what they stood for — maybe a new kind of thinking, walking, talking individualist is shaping up, one who can look at his times and think about his times the way an Elizabethan individualist could look at and think about his. Not with all this shiftily-eyed guilt at being caught holding a popular opinion, or no opinion; not with an arbitrary dedication to the defiant or the obscure or the what-used-to-be-called radical; not with a grim determination to divide everything up into minorities and majorities, where every human being I have ever met looks out of place and refuses to stay; but with a willingness to face the facts and accept the truths even when they turn out to be pretty ordinary looking facts and pretty old truths.

Maybe it is really all right to ride your times and eat well and even raise a family so long as you do not kid yourself into thinking you are still a last-stand minority and a particularly dangerous and unusual man. Maybe the only frustration these days is the necessity to believe in a myth that only the twenties and thirties could support: the myth that if a man is not particularly dangerous or particularly unusual he is not worth the dust on the top of a copy of *Das Kapital* or the heels off a pair of Gertrude Stein's old brogans.

Maybe when that myth finally fades, the 1950 thinking man who had always found it necessary to believe he was living underground will be for the first time able to look at people as people, events as events, the world as the world, and (especially) himself as himself. (Do I make myself clear? I don't believe I said bring on the bomb and the Russians.)

In the meantime one of these comfortable, slicked-up 1950 editions (he writes for the movies but pretends he is living in a cellar) has come up with a temporary solution to his dilemma. It's only a sentence, but it's such an old thought that it sounds brand new and very explosive. His answer to any contemporary problem adds up to one satisfying, resounding blast: "It all comes down to this, brother: *man is incapable of solving his problems.*"

In the



MERCURY'S OPINION

A Retraction

IN THE OCTOBER issue of the **MERCURY** we published an article entitled *The Flying Saucer Hoax*. It was a facetious bit, about a subject which we find difficult to take seriously.

Since publication we have heard from lawyers employed by Ed J. Sullivan, of Los Angeles, the founder and head of Flying Saucers Investigations, which was discussed in the article, as well as from lawyers representing Dr. Lincoln LaPaz, whom the article describes as an associate of Mr. Sullivan in Flying Saucers Investigations.

Both Mr. Sullivan and Dr. LaPaz complain that the article contained several misstatements of fact and inaccurate implications. A more careful reading of the article indicates that they have some cause for complaint.

Mr. Sullivan is described by his

attorneys as a reputable business man with a sincere interest in the mystery of flying saucers. Dr. LaPaz is a distinguished mathematician and astronomer. He has been head of the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy and Director of the Institute of Meteorics at the University of New Mexico since 1945. He has taught at Fairmont College, Harvard University, Dartmouth College, University of Chicago, Ohio State University, and in the U. S. Air Force. He has been consulted by the armed forces on meteorites and is a member of several scientific societies.

We regret any statement or implication in the article which may have offended Mr. Sullivan or Dr. LaPaz or any other individual connected with Flying Saucers Investigations. We intended no slight to the reputation of either man, and if any was inferred, we wish to retract it.

EUGENE LYONS

IS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION REALLY THREATENED?

The Hysteria Over Hysteria

THE RECENT ELECTION campaign was not exactly an inhibited, tongue-tied and fear-ridden affair. Speech was as lustily free-for-all as ever in our history and opinions as unbridled. The Democratic candidate did not hesitate to accept the support of the left-wing Americans for Democratic Action or to surround himself with brain-trusters of pinkish hues. The Progressive Party put up a noisy fight on its Communist line, and the Communist Party proper ran candidates. Not only was there no clamor for repression of unorthodox views, but the major candidates inveighed repeatedly against any tendency to cheat the Bill of Rights.

Yet the campaign — if our em-

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Eugene Lyons, a former Editor of THE MERCURY, is now a senior Editor of Reader's Digest. Among his latest books are Our Unknown E.-President, and The Red Decade.

battled “liberals” are to be believed — took place in the midst of anti-Red hysteria amounting to a reign of terror, marked by black fear, witch hunts, character assassination, and thought control. Lamentations on this score could be heard even above the tumult of the election-eering.

The theory that these United States are in the throes of unlimited hysteria, trampling wildly on customary freedoms, is no longer a matter of surmise in certain intellectual precincts. It is a fixed article of faith, impervious to contrary evidence or argument. Declamation against “the terror” is the shortest road to acceptance by the “progressive” brethren and denial of its prevalence is, by the same token, the shortest road to damnation as a hopeless reactionary. The circumstance that the American people seem blissfully ignorant of their nervous disorder is brushed aside

as irrelevant, if not additional confirmation of their distressing condition.

When I ventured to suggest, in a letter to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, that the anguished outcries over hysteria are largely a case of jitters on the Left, she told me off as another victim of the disease. My letter, she averred, "is sufficient proof that hysteria exists." Doubt of the diagnosis, in other words, is in itself a proof of the malady — which in effect makes belief in the thesis of hysteria-rampant mandatory for the kind of people Mrs. Roosevelt typifies.

Disciplined comrades presumably are plugging this thesis with tongue in cheek. But the unaffiliated liberals, it seems plain, are in deadly earnest. They could hardly be so shrill in bewailing the end of our freedoms (among them, paradoxically, the freedom to wail) if they were only play-acting. They would seem to be honestly alarmed. The death rattle of our throttled liberties is sharp in their ears; if it escapes Americans at large the fault, of course, is with a grosser sense of hearing.

At its shallowest this hysteria over hysteria is on display in a recent book by the Washington *Post* cartoonist, Herbert Block. This fellow had himself a wonderful time a couple of years back lampooning Whittaker Chambers. But his palpable blunder on that score has not

dampened Block's ardor for ridiculing anti-Communists and pooh-poohing American concern over Red plotting. He concedes that there are Soviet agents and spies at work but doesn't think "we need to go jumping out of windows or belting each other in a frenzy."

The implication — and that's the gist of the hysteria thesis — is that we are in truth behaving in this irrational fashion. The efforts to expose and neutralize those spies and agents Mr. Block boils down to this caricature: "A kind of unorganized Un-American Revolution, in which the smear-bucket brigade has been trying to sack our institutions while hollering at us to look farther under the bed."

A HAZE of nightmarish melodrama, replete with villains and heroes, surrounds such trumpeters of hysteria. At Swarthmore College in 1951, for instance, "six bold men" staged a "gathering of the unterrified," to show that there "are at least six men who have not succumbed to hysteria." Six out of 160 million is not many, but still an item of hope. Their exploit demonstrated that "Americanism is not yet extinct" — going, that is to say, but not yet gone.

It was in these exorbitant terms, at any rate, that Gerald W. Johnson, a Baltimore pundit, reported the episode of derring-do in a book review in the *New York Times*

of January 6, 1952. But what, specifically, did the courageous sextette (five professors and a judge) do? Well, it appears that they gave a series of dullish lectures on American freedom today, reaching the unanimous verdict that it was moribund. Whether they were risking their lives or only their livelihoods is not clear from Mr. Johnson's story; in any event, all six are still alive and at their accustomed jobs. The consequence of their audacity was merely a book that drew friendly press notices.

In casting the lecturers as unterrified heroes the reviewer was not spoofing. He was simply following the logic of a fixed self-delusion. One assumes that he makes out his will before venturing to exercise freedom of speech or press.

A spate of other solemn books analyzing our presumptive hysteria has been published in the last few years. All have been favorably reviewed, and not one of the alarmed authors has been deprived of life, liberty or the pursuit of royalties. In addition, Cornell University has sponsored and the Rockefeller Foundation has financed a "scientific" inquiry into the state of our liberties. Four volumes have already appeared, all insisting that those liberties are mortally menaced by the mild public concern with the communist danger. This conclusion is not surprising, since the savants selected to make the study held

this view *before* they began their laboratory work. As yet not a single book disputing the hysteria thesis has been published, proving, I suppose, that the hysterics are in a comatose state.

In a foreword to one of the alarmist books, the late Harold L. Ickes stated, as if it were obvious fact requiring no substantiation, that "if a man is addicted to vodka and fresh caviar he is, *ipso facto*, a Russian, and therefore a Communist. . . . Frightened and hysterical citizens were ready to dive into the nearest cellar and refuse to go to bed at night unless every light were blazing." The unenlightened herd might not recognize this picture of their country but the liberal *conoscenti* credit it enthusiastically.

"There is a black fear in the country brought about by the witch hunters," Lester Markel, an editor of the *New York Times*, not long ago apprised a session of the American Library Association. Accordingly and properly, his Sunday sections have specialized in testimony to this effect by American and foreign writers, with nary a column to spare for contrary witenesses. Professor Henry Steele Commager believes "We are now embarked upon a campaign of suppression and oppression more violent, more reckless, more dangerous than any in our history. Already, he says, "teachers fear to discuss

certain subjects in the classroom." Never mind the fact that he and a host of other pedagogues discuss them *ad nauseum* both in and outside the classroom.

These gentry seem oblivious to the humor of their loquacious protests against the abrogation of the right to talk and protest. Obsession has a logic all its own. One evening recently I saw and heard Arthur Garfield Hays, his mouth opened wide in a television screen close-up, shouting that in America no one any longer dares open his mouth. Another time millions of us heard Bertrand Russell, on a "Meet the Press" program, defend socialism while insisting that the expression of Leftist views is proscribed here.

ACCORDING to Raymond B. Fossdick, president emeritus of the Rockefeller Foundation, you are open to charges of Communism "if you favor fair-employment practices or are concerned about civil liberties, if you fight for the protection of the foreign-born, if you oppose religious prejudice or Jim Crowism. . . ." Which may come as shocking news to millions of Americans engaged in these causes without any sense of hazard.

Then there is the *expertise* of Bernard DeVoto, in the form of a prophecy in *Harper's Magazine*, couched, alas, in rather hysterically inelegant language. He foresaw that soon "fuzzy-minded nincompoops

and very clear-minded bastards are going to agitate for the dismissal of every college teacher who expresses an idea that would not have made Roscoe Conkling blush for its conservatism. . . . The hard-headed boys are going to hang the Communist label on everybody who holds ideas offensive to the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers or the steering committee of the Republican Party."

About three years have passed since this dire prognosis was made, but frustrated legislators still find it tough going to hang the Communist label on Communists, let alone dissenters from N.A.M. views, and fellow-traveling teachers by the hundred still fill our colleges. The prophet, undeterred, keeps on yelling "Hysteria!" The DeVotos and Commagers will not be cheated of a beloved bogey by mere reality. A Professor Edmund N. Cahn, in reviewing one of the aforementioned books, exclaims in agony: "The gallant America — the one we revere — has been bullied long enough!"

Justice William O. Douglas runs an article in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* on "The Black Silence of Fear" — surely the loudest silence on record — and the theme is hammered home resoundingly in William Shirer's *Midcentury Journey*. A left-wing poet, Alfred Kreymborg, sings the selfsame song in free verse, a dirge for true Ameri-

cans "in their paralysis, or growing fear of the Brotherhood of Man."

For another exhibit of hysteria over hysteria, from the pile before me, I pull out the October 24, 1952 issue of *Science*, organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Even DeVoto and Markel seem cheerful alongside an article on "Dangers Confronting American Science," by a physics professor at Brooklyn College named Melba Phillips. She is gloomy and angry. Now that the government "screens" scientists in its employ, she sees them as "victims of oppression" and warns that "the freedoms we have lost already, or are now in danger," are not "as easily recoverable as has been assumed." Whether world tensions continue or are resolved in war, she declares, "we do not believe that scientific freedom — or any freedom, for that matter — has the ghost of a chance of surviving."

While the distressed lady's promise of doom was still on the presses, she was subpoenaed by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and asked whether she is or ever was a member of the Communist Party. She refused to answer for fear of self-incrimination and was duly suspended by her college. A clearer sample of the real motivations behind the cries of hysteria could hardly be cited. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, one hopes, now realizes that

it has been scientifically hoaxed into advancing Kremlin propaganda.

Thus the myth of an intimidated, lynch-mob America is being peddled by folk who, inferentially, preen themselves as the exceptions to the rule, as the nobly un-intimidated few. It shows up in the strangest dimensions: as an alibi, for instance, for a dearth of good plays on Broadway! The pitch was set by Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times*, in a summary of the 1951 theatrical season. Having shown the sterility of the year, he offered his bizarre explanation: "Ignorant heresy-hunting and bigoted character assassination that have acquired the general title of McCarthyism are succeeding. . . . The hoodlums are in control here as well as in Russia."

The cue was picked up by humorist James Thurber, solemn for once, in a special article in Atkinson's columns. Some of us think that the cold war, the blood-letting in Korea, the frustrations of a victory without peace and other post-war conditions have put a damper on creativeness all over the world. But Thurber knows better, at least so far as American drama is concerned. "The American theatre," he announced, "is lying at death's door largely because of Congressional probes of playwrights." Subsequently Arthur Miller, himself a prolific play-writer despite McCarthy, offered guarded support of the Atkinson-Thurber twaddle. If

only Congress desisted from embarrassing literary stooges of the Kremlin, the theatre would bloom once more!

IN THE AGGREGATE the choral cries of hysteria amount to a smear-America campaign, and the fact that smearing America is the top assignment for Communists the world over is scarcely coincidental. Because reluctantly, fumblingly, years too late, we have begun to unmask Stalin's conspirators in our midst, our country is being painted as intolerant, frightened, hysterical, paranoiac. It is not without significance that the most vicious and unprincipled attack along these lines outside the overt Communist press should appear in the house organ of totalitarian liberalism, the *Nation*.

On June 28, 1952, this weekly produced a special 64-page issue wholly devoted to lambasting America. Its editor, Freda Kirchwey, began with a casual announcement — the initiated need no proofs — that we are “forsaking reason for panic and the imbecile acts that panic breeds.” She saw this country “piling up cruel and unjust measures” and pleaded for “restoration of democratic safeguards and procedures,” on the bland assumption that they no longer exist. There followed articles by an array of self-righteous “progressives” — most of them with long records of Communist-front affiliations — detailing

the ravages of that panic in various areas of national life.

Matthew Josephson, for instance, dealt with book publishing in this period of “mass hysteria over internal communist enemies.” His own books and those of all other contributors to the *Nation* smear are printed, acclaimed, and distributed as heretofore; authors blackballed by the liberal coterie continue to be ignored or vilified in the book supplements; but Josephson weeps over the end of liberty in publishing notwithstanding. Out in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, some official burned five or six books on sex and socialism. On the basis of this lonely and untypical incident Josephson proclaimed that “It,” meaning book-burning *à la* Hitler, has happened here. (Stalin, I might remark in passing, doesn't bother to burn books — he burns the authors.)

An unidentified “X” does an equivalent diagnosis of Hollywood, which he claims is “a hopeless push-over for any witch-hunting outfit that seeks to collect blood or blackmail.” What outfits, where and when, how much blackmail? Such minor matters are also “X.”

Professor Kirtley F. Mather, who ranks high in the statistics of academic fellow-traveling, unloads his measure of mud. He sees a “campaign to paralyze all independent thought, discussion and dissent concerning America's foreign policies.” Yes, foreign policies — as if we had

anything *but* dissent on those from all directions in recent years. He is particularly upset because, in his unsupported opinion, scientists are "favorite targets of those who look for potential traitors and subversives behind every bush." Somehow the names of Gold, Fuchs, Pontecorvo, May, and others who have been flushed too late from behind those bushes do not appear in his analysis.

This indictment of America, 64 pages of it, is graced by a paid full-page advertisement on the back cover from the American Civil Liberties Union, which thus gives its imprimatur to the shameless attack. This Praetorian Guard of our Bill of Rights, with top-shelf fellow-travelers like Corliss Lamont on its board, seems to have a professional as well as ideological interest in promoting the hysteria bogey. Witness its fund-raising letter dated September, 1952, signed by the open-mouthed Arthur Garfield Hays.

It begins with a call to crusade "against today's climate of opinion in which suspicion and fear run rampant and independent thinkers are loosely charged with communist sympathies." (These ubiquitous independent thinkers! semantic blood brothers, no doubt, of the once ubiquitous agrarian reformers in China.) Then, in the same paragraph, comes a howler of a *non sequitur*: an appeal to defend two Negroes "illegally convicted of murder." Whatever the facts of the

conviction, murder as an aspect of independent thought sets a record for confusion. It presents at long last convincing evidence of hysteria, if not in America as a whole at least in the segment for which Hays babbles. The Union's annual report for 1949 saw anti-Communist tendencies so "ominous" that "even the United Nations staff has not been immune from unsubstantiated attack in Congress as an alleged center of espionage and subversion." That, in the context of recent events, calls for no comment.

IF THE CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, the *Nation* and the rest have made little headway in convincing the American people, they have succeeded magnificently beyond our frontiers. Their thesis fits perfectly into and reinforces the larger anti-American drive abroad.

In Europe recently I was asked in all seriousness by presumably well-informed, or at any rate well-read, people about the hysteria and terror sweeping the United States. It was plain that they took these rhetorical charges quite literally, visualizing mob violence, kangaroo courts, subversives dangling from lamp posts, and "independent thinkers" cowering in cellars. My disclaimer had little effect, I fear.

A British publication called *Books of the Month*, dated October, 1952, presents an article by the librarian of the University of California,

Lawrence Clark Powell, which leads off as follows: "In this time of inquisitional nationalism, I know that I run a risk in confessing that I possess a French doctor's degree and own an English car. And what dire fate do I court when I say that I prefer English books?" I humbly recommend that the University of California undertake a study of how our Inquisition deals with the American owners of foreign cars and doctorates; the Rockefeller Foundation can surely be counted on to finance the project.

Statements like Dr. Powell's are shrugged off as self-evident imbecility here, but they find ready credence in Europe. It is not astonishing, therefore, to find a Professor Alexander McBeath of Queens University, Belfast, Ireland, in a speech on September 1, 1952, asserting as if it were indisputable fact that in the U.S.A. "dissent is regarded as disloyalty, criticism as an unfriendly act, and a difference of opinion as disaffection." Or to find the London *Daily Herald* warning that "hysteria about communism is making a dent in America's claim to call itself a democracy."

The normally sane London *Economist*, reviewing Owen Lattimore's *Ordeal* with naive credulity, says: "It is also an unfortunate fact that nobody who is tried in the United States . . . on any charge which suggests, however remotely, disloyalty can expect at this moment

to have a fair trial." The *Economist* seems unaware that even the Com-magers and the Civil Liberties Union give our courts good marks for fair and square conduct.

Bertrand Russell, on October 30, 1951, informed readers of the Manchester *Guardian* that the U.S.A. today is as much a police state as Russia under Stalin or Germany under Hitler; that "nobody ventures to pass a political remark without first looking behind the door to make sure no one [is] listening. . . . If by some misfortune you were to quote with approval some remark by Jefferson you would probably lose your job and find yourself behind bars."

Lord Russell has the courage of his nonsense. He journeyed to America to collect fees for repeating these grotesqueries to audiences of millions — and without looking behind the door. Mr. Markel was so impressed with the cogency of these charges that he gave the eminent visitor the front page of his Sunday magazine section to repeat them.

Another British liberal, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, unburdened himself in a letter to the ever hospitable New York *Times*. He declared himself "deeply troubled at what seems to amount to something very like a systematic persecution of independent thought. A liberal is expected to apologize for his doubts about a prevailing orthodoxy; to be left of

center may be to court the risk of public disgrace and loss of office." (That may come as a surprise to some 27 million citizens who voted for a left-of-center Presidential candidate on November 4.) And Graham Greene, immediately upon reaching Hollywood, proclaimed that the movie capital was under "a reign of terror."

That is how hysteria over hysteria snowballs. From the New York *Nation* to the London *Nation* and back again to the New York *Times*. From Markel to Bertrand Russell and back again to Markel. Each assertion seems to reinforce the other until the dissenter is driven to conclude that dissent, at least in this one area, is indeed being suppressed.

THE ONE CONSOLATION, as we face the propaganda portrait of a distraught, hysterical America, is that it implies a nation of heroes. For the unterrified seem roughly equal to our entire population. Heedless of the awful risks, Americans continue to quote Jefferson, express unpopular views, champion minority causes and in general deport themselves as per usual.

It is almost a pity to spoil the picture of universal valor by insisting that the whole tale of terror is a phony. The American people finally have learned some of the facts of life about the Communist conspiracy, espionage, false-fronts, infiltration. More and more of their

earnings are being soaked up by the cold war. Their sons are dying in a hot war with Communists in Korea. Against this background, the country has remained remarkably calm, tolerant and Hamlet-like in its search for remedies within the framework of traditional freedoms. A better case, in fact, could be made out for general apathy than for hysteria.

The Communist Party, officially adjudged a foreign agency, has not been outlawed. Its mass meetings, "peace" movements, and other mischief-mongering have not abated. Organizations formally labeled subversive are doing a brisk business at the old stand. Communist-controlled trade unions still function as accredited bargaining agencies in industries vital to national security.

The best test of a nation's state of nerves is in its administration of justice. That, no doubt, is why distant critics like the London *Economist*, having swallowed the hysteria myth, take it for granted that American justice is a shambles. Yet our courts have been bending backward to give accused Reds the benefit of every legal loophole. Judith Coplon and William Remington, convicted by juries, are at liberty on technicalities. Fully identified traitors are protected by statutes of limitation and hundreds of Communists, on the plea of self-incrimination, find cozy shelter behind the allegedly defunct Bill of

Rights. The Supreme Court has made a number of rulings favorable to the Red-front outfits. The trials of Communist leaders under the Smith Act drag on for many months precisely because of the meticulous observance of the rights of the defendants.

Of the dozens of men and women identified as spies by Chambers, Bentley, Budenz and others, only three or four have been punished. The rest continue to work, teach, agitate and complain of "oppression" unmolested. Clarence F. Hiskey, accused under oath of atomic espionage, and refusing to answer essential questions on grounds of self-incrimination, was for a time rehired by Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. A Congressional pamphlet on Soviet espionage, *The Shameful Years*, swarms with names of Americans — businessmen, lawyers, teachers, writers — who remain free to carry on. Surely the immunity of such people does not jibe with the story of a nation wildly hysterical.

Lattimore has recounted how his own university and scores of eminent admirers elsewhere rallied to his defense. Immediately after his testimony before the McCarran Committee, in which he hedged and crawled and lied, he was invited to address the Academy of Social and Political Science in Philadelphia, even as Alger Hiss addressed a Quaker seminar after his first trial. "On the university campuses," Wil-

liam Henry Chamberlin has attested, "Lattimore is a hero and Senator McCarthy a deep-dyed villain." Try to fit such things into a pattern of public dementia! Suppose that Lattimore had been as intimately and persistently connected with Nazi instead of Communist persons and views, would the embattled civil libertines have been so solicitous about his "martyrdom?"

Those who prate of a "black night of fear" should be asked a few elementary questions. Are they alone without fear that they dare speak so loudly? Is the prodigious outcry against McCarthy really consistent with their assumptions of fear and silence? Was Governor Stevenson afraid to lambaste anti-Communists and make light of Red conspirators as mere "phantoms?" Have officials, from the President down, been too intimidated to yell "red herring" when Communists were pried out of government woodwork? Did Mrs. Roosevelt hesitate to smear Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, the accusers rather than the accused, before all the evidence was in?

Such questions could be listed for pages. If there was a touch of hysteria following the revelations about spy rings, it was not in the general public, which took the news with strange detachment. It was, rather, in the speed and heat with which the leading liberals rushed to defend

the suspects and castigate those making the disclosures.

If this country were in the knowing mood described by Lord Russell and the Americans who gave him his line, we might expect the shocking findings of the Senate committee with regard to the Institute of Pacific Relations to receive immense space and evoke indignant editorials in the press. But except for routine news stories, the press substantially ignored the great historic report. Nor have the committee's revelations deterred great banks and foundations from continuing to finance the I.P.R. or respectable public figures from lending it the prestige of their names.

The prize exhibit of alleged thought control is the University of California loyalty oath. But the hysteria boys slur over the most telling fact in that episode: the fact that the oath was killed by due process of law. The efficacy of loyalty pledges is open to question. What needs to be noted, however, is that teachers have not only refused to sign but have made their refusal stick.

Considering that some 3,000 professors have in recent years chalked up a total of 26,000 Communist-front affiliations, the dismissal of a handful of them attests long-suffering patience rather than a witch hunt. More than 160 professors publicly sponsored the notorious Waldorf-Astoria "Peace" Confer-

ence, a frankly Soviet show, and 112 sponsored a Bill of Rights Conference addressed by Communist Party leaders. Not one of those educators has lost his job on this account. The American Association of University Professors could hardly have been terrified when it formally approved employment of Communists as teachers several years ago, a policy to which it still adheres.

For a community of the gagged, educators seem to be strangely vociferous in support of Stalinist causes. A study of addiction to Red false-fronts made by Dr. J. B. Matthews shows its incidence to be highest among educators, who make up over 25 percent of those who join Communist-controlled activities and step into Communist booby-traps. Evidently they *are* terror-stricken — that they may be mistaken for conservatives. Professor Ludwig Lewisohn of Brandeis University came close to the realities when he wrote: "The only scholar, the only type of student, who is still forced into a defensive position on American campuses today is the conservative teacher or student, the religious teacher or student."

THERE IS a grim joker in the hysteria over hysteria. It is the attempt to correlate Communist conspiracy with free speech, independent thought, dissenting opinion, academic freedom. That's the

psychological gimmick: to extend these noble values to cover spying, theft of official secrets, plotting, lying under oath, and covert corruption of young minds. This, as Professor Peter Viereck has pointed out, conveniently confuses criminal deeds and the preparation of criminal deeds with civil freedoms.

The essence of the totalitarian liberal demand, stripped of double-talk, is not the Communist's or fellow-traveler's right to speak his views — no one has denied that — but his right to *conceal* and *mislabel* his real views and conspiratorial purposes. In effect Commager, DeVoto and company want to guarantee for subversives and Kremlin agents the privilege of fooling and betraying their fellow-Americans, not as "independent thinkers" but as purveyors of propaganda who have renounced the right of independent thinking. "Their strategy," to quote Viereck again, is to "denounce America's defense against totalitarian *acts* as if they were suppression of *ideas* and hence of freedom."

Undoubtedly many of the fomenters of hysteria over hysteria are truly concerned with freedom. These are the parrots, the dupes, the dopes. Their confusion stems from the premise that Communists "despite everything" are a species of social crusaders.

But so far as the conscious comrades and fellow-travelers are con-

cerned, the goals of their strategy are fairly obvious. In the measure that they succeed, they adroitly transfer the onus from the accused to the accusers. They intimidate those who would expose Stalin's crowd. At the same time they promote the fairy tale, so helpful to their operations, that effective resistance to Red skulduggery is impossible within the limits of the Bill of Rights. Which is nonsense. The Founding Fathers could hardly have intended to leave their republic powerless to hunt out those dedicated to its destruction.

Some years ago the smear-word for too-earnest anti-Communists was "redbaiter." It actually deterred many an American from interfering with the Kremlin rackets. Timorous souls hid or watered down their hatred of Communism for fear of the label.

Today "hysteria" and "McCarthyism" serve the same deterrent purpose, precisely as the manipulators of these specious tags planned it. And again too many enemies of Stalinism with a Milquetoast streak dilute their anti-Communism with pious assurances that *they*, God forbid, are not hysterical or McCarthyite.

The hysteria bogey must be demolished to clear the road to more effective struggle with the Communist menace, which is the central task of this period. The danger today is not hysteria but complacency.

The Los Angeles Mirror

Sex, Slaughter, & Liberalism

By Joseph Stocker

AT 8:21:38 A.M. on October 11, 1948, the first copy of the first issue of the Los Angeles *Mirror* rolled off the press. The event was attended by that ritual which Los Angeles decrees for the start of all new enterprises, from filling stations to bail bond agencies. Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and Don Ameche were there. Jimmy Durante dedicated a song; and a stacked-up starlet said the *Mirror* was the paper she "would like most to cuddle up with after a hard day's studio work."

With such a start it is no wonder that the *Mirror* today is successful. Its circulation has soared to 212,000, making it the second largest afternoon paper in the West. It has passed one of its rivals, the *Daily News*, in circulation, and is breath-

ing down the neck of Hearst's *Herald Express*, traditional top-dog among Western afternoon dailies. What the *News* and the *Express* have lost in circulation almost exactly equals what the *Mirror* has gained; so it would appear that the new tabloid has taken its business right out of its competitors' hides instead of from increased population.

So the *Mirror* is now claiming, with justification, that it is the first new metropolitan newspaper in twenty-five years to get on its feet in America. (The last one was the *Chicago Times*, now the *Sun-Times*.)

The *Mirror's* achievement becomes all the more remarkable when one considers the fantastically competitive character of Los Angeles journalism. Besides the *Mirror's* two afternoon competitors, there are two morning metropolitan papers — Hearst's *Examiner* and the independent *Times*. And scattered around the vast Los Angeles area are a score of

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regional dailies, 71 weeklies and 165 throwaways.

The *Mirror* has succeeded, furthermore, in defiance of the prevailing tendency among newspapers, the tendency to go down instead of up. In this era of ever-mounting production costs and ever-widening competition from TV and radio, dailies all over the land are folding, merging or floating new loans at the bank.

WHAT, THEN, does it take to start a new newspaper in these times? What is the secret of the *Mirror's* success?

First and foremost — money. Pots of it. The *Mirror* is backed by the rich Los Angeles *Times* and its rich publisher, Norman Chandler. An educated estimate is that Chandler has dumped \$10 million into the *Mirror*, of which \$5 million or more went for a flossy 10-story building.

Second (and this is really tangential to No. 1), price-cutting. When the *Mirror's* rivals went from five to seven cents, the *Mirror* stayed at a nickel. When they jumped to a dime, the *Mirror* went to seven cents. That's where it is now.

Third, a steady diet of sex and slaughter. L.A. newspaper readers were weaned a long time ago on this sort of fare. The *Mirror*, far from trying to reform their somewhat earthy taste, is exploiting it.

Fourth, a crisp, sharp, succinct style of newspapering. *Mirror* stories

rarely tax the customer's time, patience or mental capacity. Once in a while the paper throws a bone to the literate, as it did when it ran a series on the life of Shaw. But this isn't allowed to happen so often as to bore the grimy masses.

Fifth, lots of ginger, enterprise and imagination. In the eyes of one *Mirror* editor, this results in "hitting harder and breaking faster — out-thinking 'em and out-playing 'em." In the eyes of one opposition editor, it results in "cooking up stories and then contriving the facts to match them."

Sixth, a community that is growing in at an almost insane rate, with tens of thousands of new citizens whose newspaper-reading habits haven't congealed.

Seventh (and this is really tangential to No. 6), a newspaper tailored to the population. The population in this case includes millions of people attracted to Los Angeles by jobs in new industries. They're working-class people, and the *Mirror* is deliberately a working-class paper. The population also includes ever-increasing minority elements — Jews, Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Orientals. The *Mirror* committed the relative heresy of publishing pictures of Negroes and prints frequent articles and series of articles dealing with minority problems.

Eighth and lastly, an editorial policy which, if it isn't exactly liberal, makes sufficiently liberal noises

to suggest that it might be if it tried a little harder.

In a fairly large majority of cases the *Mirror* simply straddles the fence. Even on the MacArthur firing it managed to remain impartial, when all around it newspapers and people were enjoying apoplectic partisanship. "We don't feel," said a *Mirror* brasshat, "that we automatically have to thunder on one side or the other." The *Mirror* also doesn't want to make anybody mad when it doesn't have to. It seems to be happiest when it is taking unyielding stands in favor of Boy Scouts, Christmas, organized football and hiring the handicapped.

But occasionally the paper fixes on an editorial position at the other extreme from its conservative mother sheet, the *Times*. It has reproached three of the *Times*' favorite heroes — Senator Taft, Chiang Kai-shek and Senator McCarthy. It supported the teaching of UNESCO principles in the city schools during a recent community donnybrook in which the Hearst papers and the *Times* were suspecting that UNESCO was subversive. Its attitude toward labor has been one of friendly neutrality and sometimes even sympathy. (The *Times* has baited labor ever since its plant was bombed years ago in a labor controversy.)

The *Mirror* includes Socialist Norman Thomas among its syndicated columnists, while the *Times* tends to choke up when discussing

anybody more radical than Senators Byrd or Dirksen.

Such seeming schizophrenia in the *Times-Mirror* personality doesn't necessarily reflect ideological conviction on the part of the *Mirror's* own management. Nor does it reflect a betrayal of his class on the part of Mr. Chandler. It simply means recognition of a fact of life on the part of both the *Mirror* and Chandler. The fact, as stated by one of the *Mirror's* editors, is that "you can't get mass circulation by slapping the people in the face."

In modified sense, the *Mirror* is making use of the formula which snatched the failing New York *Post* from the sheriff's outstretched hands not long ago. The formula, as devised by the *Post's* editor, James A. Wechsler: Sex on page one to get 'em to buy the paper in the first place; liberalism on the editorial page to make 'em want to buy it again.

THE MIRROR GOT off to a rocky start. It tried to be a different newspaper and managed to be so different that not very many people wanted to read it. Its front page ran sideways instead of in the traditional tabloid fashion of up-and-down. Its comics were scattered. It ran heavily to fancy color and flowery decoration. Its news was rather on the significant side. The first issue led off with a spread titled "Must War Come Again?," containing the views of such personages as Church-

ill, Peron and De Gasperi, specially cabled at the *Mirror's* invitation. Stalin declined.

Most of the newspaper buyers also declined. The *Mirror's* sideways front page gave them a crick in the neck and its significant news bored them. The *Mirror*, having guaranteed its advertisers a minimum of 100,000 circulation, got stuck at 70,000. "We shot off the hip and went too fast," says the *Mirror's* silver-haired editor, Virgil Pinkley. "We had three months of preparation. We should have put in six months to a year."

Another fact may have had some bearing on the *Mirror's* early tribulations. Its top jobs were all filled by ex-United Press executives. Pinkley had been European general manager and vice president of UP. J. Edward Murray, the managing editor, had been bureau chief in Rome. Phillip H. Ault, assistant managing editor, was UP chief in London. They were good newspapermen who had never put out a newspaper.

Chandler decided that if his new team wasn't to be shoved back across its own goal line before the game got underway, he'd better send in a substitute quarterback. The quarterback was the *Times's* own city editor, Hugh "Bud" Lewis, who knew both newspapering and Los Angeles.

Changes came fast. The horizontal front page was made perpendicular so that readers could read it without

standing on their heads. The comics were bunched and the fancy color and flowery decorations tossed out. The balance of news content shifted from global significance to local sensation. *Mirror* readers began getting less Churchill and De Gasperi and more Rita Hayworth and Aly Khan.

It must have been just what they wanted. The *Mirror's* circulation started climbing and has been climbing ever since.

"Bud" Lewis, the substitute quarterback, long ago went back to his old job on the *Times* city desk. But the formula by which the *Mirror* punted its way out of the end zone still prevails.

The formula can be said to consist, in approximately equal parts, of knocking-'em-cold and keeping-'em-in-suspense.

FOR PURPOSES OF knocking-'em-cold, the *Mirror* runs one crusade after another. They're conducted along well-defined lines — against evil and in behalf of virtue. The *Mirror* has taken successive beads on such targets as loan sharks, gambling, college Communists, black market baby rackets and crooked TV repairmen who replace picture tubes that aren't worn out.

Such crusades as these can be calculated to incur little disfavor. Now and then, however, the *Mirror* selects an issue on which there is a substantial division of thought in Los Angeles. One such was vivisection.

tion. The Hearst papers were stridently against it, and had been for years. They said it constituted cruelty to animals. The *Mirror* came out for it, contending that to deny science the right to experiment on unwanted dogs and cats constituted cruelty to people. Hearst took a beating on that one. With the help of the *Mirror*, an ordinance was approved by the voters to permit scientific vivisection. From the Hearst end of town, little has been heard on the subject of vivisection since then.

For purposes of keeping 'em-in-suspense (and to keep 'em coming back for more *Mirrors*), the paper publishes long features in series. It publishes so many of them that they appear two and three at a time, a new one beginning before an old one finishes. The subject matter ranges all the way from exposé ("Gangland's Golden Artery") to exercise (how to keep fit without it).

Confessionals are also popular. Among the most successful was one which purported to be movie star Robert Mitchum's "own story" of how he got mixed up with narcotics. This may have created the image of a remorseful actor tip-toeing up the back stairway at the *Mirror* to lay his shame on the desk of a sympathetic editor. What actually happened is that Mitchum made a routine report to the county probation officer. A *Mirror* staffer took down excerpts from the report and

fashioned them into a first-person story. There was nothing unethical about it, insist the *Mirror* people, because they didn't say the story was *by* Robert Mitchum. And, anyway, the series was good for an extra 10,000 circulation. In the jungle of Los Angeles journalism, this seems to justify almost anything short of dynamiting the 20th Century-Fox studios.

The *Mirror* has never dynamited a movie studio, but it has resorted to the atom bomb to gain circulation. On the 10th anniversary of Pearl Harbor it sent 40 airplanes to shower Los Angeles with 2,000,000 leaflets. If these had included an atom bomb or two, said the leaflets, L.A.'s citizens would have been dead pigeons. The *Mirror* called the stunt "Operation Wakeup," described it as a warning to the city to tighten up its civil defense and, incidentally, sold a lot of papers.

NOT ALL THE *Mirror's* stunts have been successes. In its early days it ran what it called "Mirrorfone Exclusives." A reporter would get on the telephone and call Madame Chiang on Formosa or King Farouk in Cairo. Then he'd ask some questions and out would come the *Mirror* with one of its copyrighted "Mirrorfone Exclusives" (referred to derisively by the *Herald-Express* as "Mirrorfonies").

Much of the time it was hogwash, as when the paper called Tito in

Yugoslavia. It had to submit six questions to an interpreter at the other end of the line, and then the interpreter called back the answers. Q.: "What would you do if Russian soldiers crossed the frontier?" A.: "Yugoslavia is an independent sovereign nation." *Mirror* lead: "Marshal Tito in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, indicated today in an exclusive Mirrorfone interview that Yugoslavia would fight for its independence if invaded by Russia."

On another occasion, when the U.S.S. Missouri got hung up on a mud flat in Chesapeake Bay, the paper put through a call to the Mighty Mo's deck officer.

"Lieutenant, this is the Los Angeles *Mirror*," said the reporter. "What happened?"

"Sorry, sir," replied the officer. "I can't tell the mayor anything."

The *Mirror* abandoned its "Mirrorfone Exclusives" after a few months.

Another feature installed during those first anxious days of circulation-building has proved more durable. It's the *Mirror's* "agony column," which runs in the classified section under the heading of "Strictly Personal." Most of the items in "Strictly Personal" are variations on the boy-wants-to-meet-girl theme and vice versa. And many of them have had a suspicious sort of slickness, suggesting that they just might have been written by some of the *Mirror's* own facile staff members.

"Strictly Personal" is just what the *Mirror's* editors say it is — an "attention-getter" — and undoubtedly has accounted for much new circulation.

Besides "attention-getters," any newspaper just starting in the big city needs to establish that it wears no man's collar. The *Mirror* did that in the case of one of its major advertisers, a Los Angeles department store.

The paper, mindful that its readership was mostly middle class, lower middle class and highly budget-conscious, was giving prominence to the story of the Macy-Gimbel's price war in New York. The local department store squawked. This, it said, was the sort of thing that might start a price war in Los Angeles. The *Mirror* stood its ground. The store pulled its advertising out of the paper and stayed out for a number of months. "One of the problems of a new newspaper," said a *Mirror* editor at the time, "is gaining people's respect. When this incident blows over, we'll have gained more respect than if we'd crawled." Measured again by the only trustworthy yardstick of the newspaper business, namely, circulation, that seems to have been a judicious forecast.

A NEWSPAPER just getting started in the big city needs also to develop local columnists who in turn can develop sizable local followings.

The *Mirror* has done that with two columnists in particular — a young newcomer named Paul V. Coates and a veteran of the journalistic wars, Florabel Muir.

Coates, who had never worked on a newspaper in his life, got a job at the *Mirror* writing an occasional restaurant and night club column. One day he delivered a jeremiad on the subject of home-cooking. Letters poured in from indignant housewives who said he didn't know what he was talking about. And if he'd come to their house for dinner, they'd show him. Coates did exactly that. He ate dinner at 40 or 50 different homes, including that of a Scotch family which fed him "haggis" (coarse oatmeal sewn into the belly of a goat). He provoked such a stir with his eating-out series that he graduated to general columnist, specializing now in stories about Los Angeles sin.

Florabel Muir brought a ready-made reputation to the *Mirror*. She was (and still is) Hollywood correspondent for the New York *Daily News*. In a long and adventurous career, she had pulled off such exploits as helping the N. Y. *News* filch a photo of Ruth Snyder in the Sing Sing electric chair. A large, robust and middle-aged lady with red hair, she admits to having been around Hollywood long enough "to know who's who and where the bodies are buried." In fact, she herself came very close to being one

of the bodies. She was standing a few feet from Gangster Mickey Cohen the night he was shot down on Hollywood's Sunset Strip. Florabel took a ricocheting slug in the hip but still managed to give the *Mirror* a story that sold a large number of papers.

More recently she figured in another and equally celebrated episode. That was when Franchot Tone, angry at something she had written about him, spat in her face at Ciro's. Considering Florabel's size and general formidability, Tone was to be credited — if not with courteousness — at least with courage.

What with these and similar escapades, Florabel probably is responsible for more *Mirror* circulation than any columnist in the paper. But she exemplifies a razzle-dazzle approach to journalism which has led the *Mirror's* rivals to regard the paper as nothing more nor less than a West Coast carbon copy of the New York tabs. "It's a fine New York subway job," said one opposition newsman reflectively. "But Los Angeles doesn't have any subways."

There possibly is some validity to this indictment. Nevertheless differences do exist between the *Mirror* and its Manhattan counterparts. New York tabloids are geared to a rapid-transit audience — the reader who buys a paper on his way out of the office and finishes it before he gets off the subway. Los Angeles being anything but a rapid-transit

town, the *Mirror* directs much of its appeal to home delivery, aiming for what it calls "a family newspaper in a concise, bright package."

Consider, for example, its attitude toward sex. The *Mirror* gives at least adequate coverage to this bewitching subject. But it has been known to jerk a sex orgy story out of its home editions to avoid offending its gentle living-room readership. As one of the *Mirror's* editors expressed it: "We've tried to put lace panties on sex."

Critics of the new tabloid submit another argument, with just the barest suggestion of a sneer. They say that any new newspaper could be put on its feet with the unlimited resources of a Los Angeles *Times* and a Norman Chandler behind it. This might seem a logical conclusion until one remembers that New York's *PM* and the Chicago *Sun* tried it with the resources of a Marshall Field behind them, and failed.

BUT ON ONE point the *Mirror's* local detractors seem to have something. That's the current tax situation. Without it, they say, the *Mirror* might not have survived and probably wouldn't have been launched in the first place. To put it in the extremely blunt words of a competing editor, "From the standpoint of income taxes, Chandler requires a juicy loser."

Allowing for a certain amount of sour grapes, this is very likely the

case. And thus we are presented with another of our helpful hints — No. 9, as it turns out — on how to start a big city newspaper. For it happens that Chandler is possessed of multitudinous business and real estate interests in addition to the fat and profitable *Times*. Hence it has been possible for him to prune some of the excess out of his income tax returns by writing off his *Mirror* losses. Perhaps he has derived a certain philosophical satisfaction, too, from not having to pay that much additional tax money to a Democratic administration which he abominated.

An interesting footnote is the fact that the *Mirror*, for all its success, isn't in the black yet, although it says it's getting close. In normal times and under normal circumstances, any business still losing money after more than four years of operation might be given up as a bad bet. But, the tax situation being what it is, Chandler seems to be prepared to go on indefinitely, if necessary, allowing Uncle Sam to share with him the excitement (and expense) of running a new big-city newspaper.

The paper may have fallen slightly shy, so far, of living up to the magniloquent claim it has made for itself — "a success story which is a romance of modern journalism." But it truly may be said that the Los Angeles *Mirror* is a mid-century phenomenon — a product of the times as well as the *Times*.

REPORT ON GERMANY:

Hitler and Stalin, for all their mutual denunciation, made a pact in 1941 against the democracies. As Mr. Salter shows in the case of East Germany, and Mr. Goldbloom in the case of West Germany, neo-Nazis and Communists are again seeking an unholy alliance against the West.

Ernest J. Salter

The Immoral Alliance

THERE IS a long history of collaboration between Russian Communism and German nationalism. The origins of this collaboration are one thing, its current form something else again. But we cannot understand the former without knowing something about the latter.

Since 1918 the Communists have been trying by every means to conquer Germany, which is indispensable to them as the jumping-off point for their political and military conquest of Europe. They have followed two main tactics in this campaign. On the one hand, they have tried to capture the industrial working class by conventional methods of agitation, the same methods Com-

munist uses the world over. On the other, they have ardently courted the aid and support of German nationalists.

Certain German nationalists for their part have also wanted an alliance of Germany and Russian Bolshevism against Western Europe. Ernst Niekisch in 1930, in his book *Entscheidung* ("Decision"), wrote as follows: "Destiny compels Germany, if she is to recover her independence, to set her face against Europe; the only way for Germany to win back her freedom is to help the Russo-Asiatic drive against Europe." Today Ernst Niekisch is a member of the Communist-controlled Socialist Unity Party of East Germany and a professor at the Humboldt University in East Berlin; he is just as fanatical now in pushing his political ideas as he was during the thirties.

This joining forces of nationalists

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Ernest J. Salter keeps a close watch on the events in Eastern Germany as East Zone editor of the U. S. German-language paper Die Neue Zeitung in West Berlin.

and Bolsheviks is the logical consequence of Germany's being a defeated nation, for German nationalism and Russian Bolshevism are one in their enmity to the European *status quo*. After 1919 as after 1945, Germany was a conquered country. Because she smarted under defeat and felt herself in a humiliating subservience to the victorious powers, all political matters took on a national (and nationalist) coloration. This held true also of the Communist Party. Early in its career it had to expel various groups that were too obstinate in insisting that Communism was the enemy of nationalism.

By 1923, during the terrible crisis of the German inflation, "National Bolshevism" ceased to be a mere tendency and became a kind of official party. The appearance on the scene of nationalist terrorist groups (Schlageter's, for example) gave the Communist Party its chance to team up with German nationalism. It was at this time that Karl Radek, representing the Comintern, made a famous speech on Schlageter, in which he proposed that nationalists join with Communists in revolutionary action against the Treaty of Versailles. Discussions between the two groups followed, in which Count Reventlow, editor of the nationalist paper *Der Reichswart*, and Moeller van den Bruck, inventor of the slogan "the Third Reich," took part. But these were only surface happen-

ings. Meanwhile, undercover diplomacy had already arranged a firm alliance between the Reichswehr and the Red Army. The Reichswehr had training grounds on Soviet soil, and manufactured airplanes, artillery, and poison gas in Russian factories. The Reichswehr was the rock of political power upon which the ideology of National Bolshevism was based.

AT THIS TIME Niekisch summed up, in a brilliant formulation, the viewpoint of German nationalism. He wrote: "Despite the stupidity of their doctrines, Communism and Bolshevism are the two most effective expressions of anti-Roman and anti-European fanaticism. The minute that hundreds of millions of Russian fanatics of this sort unite with eighty million equally fanatical Germans, the system set up at Versailles will collapse like a house of cards. . . . Hidden in the womb of the East are the seeds of a great Slavogerman world empire." A year before, in his book *Gedanken über deutsche Politik* ("Thoughts on German Politics"), Niekisch had sung a hymn of hate against France. "Whether Germany will exist or not really depends on the fate of Russia. The more Russia recovers her strength and grows aware of her superiority to France's parasite states — Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania — the greater Germany's influence and importance will become. If Germany

wants her freedom, she must want a powerful Russia."

In 1929, in the eyes of this ideologue, there was only one alternative for Germany other than National Bolshevism: it could "either become Asiatic or become African, uniting itself either to a Negrified France or to the Russia of the Tartars." As his own program, he proposed "a Central Europe under the leadership of Germany. This program can be carried out only against France, never with her. But even to arrive at that Central Europe, Germany must go a long way in the company of Russia and join with her in a large number of risky ventures."

AFTER Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945, the alliance between Prussianism and Stalinism took a new shape. For some time, the pretense of a popular front with the democratic German forces was maintained. But the intensification of the cold war and break-up of the alliance with the Allies inevitably led the Soviet Union to adopt a different strategy. The German Communists, especially in the last three years, have taken a flatly nationalist stand. They think that playing up to German nationalism is a sure way for them to rally the large majority of Germans "against the Anglo-American warmongers."

I don't want to go into the question of the secret Communist organizations in which Communists are

now allied with German nationalists. The secret police has a character all its own, and doesn't bother its head about ideology and "principle." The fact is that a good many former Gestapo leaders are today working as "specialists" in the employ of the secret police of the Soviet zone. The N.K.V.D. — or rather S.E.D. — men don't have to carry Communist Party cards. The only thing that matters in their case to the Soviet authorities is how effective are their methods and how efficient their organization. But what we are concerned with in this article is politics and not police work.

In the Soviet zone of occupation there was an important group, made up of former Nazis, which according to the terms of Soviet agreements with the Allies were barred from taking any part in political life. In March, 1948, the Soviets started putting out a newspaper for the benefit of these people, the *National Zeitung*. Albrecht Albert, former editor-in-chief of the Berlin Nazi newspaper *12 Uhr Blatt*, agreed to manage this daily. The *National Zeitung* served as the journalistic mouthpiece of the German National Democratic Party (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), founded in the Soviet zone in 1948. This party, working under the orders of the Soviet Military Administration, had the job of organizing former Nazis into a force that would serve Russian Communism. Most of these

ex-Nazis underwent, as Soviet prisoners of war, an intensive political "drilling," later being sent back to Germany as direct representatives of the Soviet authorities. A large number of them are also working indirectly for the Soviet secret police.

THE POLITICAL evolution of a divided Germany has inevitably resulted in the creation of two separate German armies. One of these, the future military force of West Germany, is intended to form a part of the European defense system. The other, the "National Army" already established by the Communists, can only be regarded as a Soviet foreign legion. In the latter, the alliance between Stalinism and German nationalism will play a role of the greatest importance. The Nazi army and party leaders who were "re-educated" under Soviet tutelage into National Bolsheviks, have the job of persuading and coercing this army into fighting for Stalin. Theirs is the task of winning the support of the German veterans for Soviet policy. Thus, at a congress held in Leipzig at the end of June, 1952, Vincenz Mueller, former lieutenant general in command of the Twelfth Army Corps, urged his party comrades to convince "the front generation which fought under the banners of Hitler that they are just the ones on whom we are calling to become the front generation in the struggle for peace." This congress issued a

proclamation, "To the Front Generation," which had among its signers Karl Friedrich, former colonel in charge of a camp of the Nazi Labor Service, Karl Endter, a former general of the S.A.; Heinz Stange, formerly head of the Nazi Reich's schools at Oberursel near Frankfurt-am-Main and Geltow near Potsdam; etc., etc.

Today, it is an advantage, in entering Communist politics in Germany, to have held down a big job in the Nazi Party or in Hitler's army. The former Nazi Party member Herbert Gerik, once a Hitler youth leader, is today a deputy to the "People's Chamber." Another former Hitler youth leader by the name of Schmots is in charge of personnel matters for the central committee of the Communist Free German Youth. Krupka, formerly a local Nazi leader, is also a deputy to the People's Chamber. The former Nazi Party official Wilhelm Jurczek is an important contact man with nationalist circles in the Federal Republic. These are only a few instances of the hundreds and thousands of ex-Nazis who are at this moment working for the German Communist Party or directly for the Soviet occupation authorities.

Not only have individual Nazis been reappearing but, along with them, there has been a marked recrudescence of nationalist slogans and propaganda. The National Bolshevik group of former Soviet pris-

oners mentioned above is already using the symbols and slogans of the S.S. Today, in East Berlin Communist periodicals, you can read such things as this: "The essence of honor is loyalty"; and "Our honor is called Germany." These publications talk about a "war of liberation." It is symptomatic that in Leipzig on June 19, 1952, the leader of the National Democratic Party placed a wreath on the monument commemorating the defeat of Napoleon in the Battle of Leipzig in 1813. This wreath was inscribed "to the memory of those Russian and German heroes of the battles for liberation between 1813 and 1815 who laid down their lives for the national rebirth of the German people and for the peace of Europe."

In this connection it should be noted that some weeks previously, Fritz Lange, a member of the central committee of the Communist Party, had called on party members to exploit the names of such national heroes of Prussia as Scharnhorst, von Gneisenau, Arndt, and Jahn in their nationalist propaganda. He cited the example of the struggle against France which these men had carried on as a precedent

for present Communist policy. The Soviets are trying to pass themselves off as liberators of Europe in the tradition of Russian Czarism: as Alexander I freed Europe of the Napoleonic yoke (so they claim) at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the same way they will strike off the "American imperialist yoke." The Marxist tradition of anti-Czarism has entirely disappeared from German Communist theory and practice. The German Communists today look on the Czarist heroes of Stalinist nationalism, Kutuzov and Suvarov, as their own heroes.

THUS there has been an astonishing rebirth of German nationalism, promoted by the German Communist Party and its satellite parties. The Hitler-Stalin alliance against the democratic states did not die with the former's death; on the contrary, it shows every sign of continuing to flourish. The conditions under which it operates are new, but the slogans it uses have scarcely changed. Perhaps Communist policy in Germany is the best proof of the essential similarity and collusion of the two great totalitarianisms of the twentieth century.

REPORT ON GERMANY: 2

Maurice J. Goldbloom

The Red and the Brown

West Germany's Totalitarian Troubles

IN THE SOVIET ZONE of Germany, the continuation of a totalitarian environment has naturally led to the reappearance on the scene of "re-formed" Nazi personnel. In West Germany, on the other hand, the occupying powers have from the beginning aimed at eliminating both the institutional and the ideological remnants of the Nazi regime. The methods used have not perhaps always been ideally suited to their purpose, but the will has unquestionably been there.

Nevertheless, the thirteen years of Nazi rule inevitably left an impress which has not yet altogether disappeared. Hitler's fall did not turn all Nazis into good German democrats overnight — any more than his coming to power turned all good German democrats into Nazis. We must ask ourselves, not whether

there are *any* totalitarian forces in West Germany today, but how powerful these forces are; how strategically they are placed; whether they are gaining or losing ground; what methods they are using; and what factors in the existing situation help or hinder them — and what their relation to the greatest surviving totalitarian power may be.

Both totalitarianisms, red and brown, have their followers in West Germany. At the end of the war, the Western powers were still under the illusion that the Communists were a part of the democratic world; they therefore gave them the same facilities they granted the democratic parties. Indeed, the Communists were often actually assisted by occupation officials some of whom were themselves Communists and in a position to exert a disproportionate influence on policy. And of course they received substantial assistance of a material sort from the East. Despite these advantages, however,

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the Communists in postwar West Germany have never come near their pre-Hitler strength. For if the Soviet Union buoyed them up with propaganda and cash, it also burdened them down with the load of Soviet policy and practice. And the burden far outweighed the support. As long as the Soviet occupation of East Germany is based on total exploitation and total oppression, as long as there are millions of refugees whom the Red Army drove from their homes, and millions of families with relatives doing forced labor in Soviet prisoner-of-war camps — as long as all this continues there is little danger of the Communists becoming a real political threat in West Germany. In the first postwar German elections, held in 1946, the Communists polled a third to a half of their pre-Hitler vote in all three Western zones. In subsequent elections in West Germany, their strength declined steadily. Today, they poll less than five per cent of the vote in the German Federal Republic as a whole, and it is doubtful whether they will poll even that much in any of its states when new general elections take place next year.

ON THE OTHER HAND, there has been a steady rise in the percentage of votes received by neo-Nazi groups. In part, this is due to the fact that such groups were originally outlawed by the occupation authorities. Hence, as they gradu-

ally organized and reappeared on the political scene, their surface strength naturally increased. But even allowing for this initial factor, their gains have continued in the last couple of years. Thus, in three recent by-elections to fill vacant seats in the Federal Parliament, candidates of the neo-Nazi Socialist Reich Party polled over ten per cent of the vote, not a high figure, but substantial enough.

In many ways, the propaganda of the Communists and the propaganda of the neo-Nazis have been very similar. Both have sought in particular to appeal to the refugees, whose unhappy position has made them especially vulnerable to extremist demagoguery. They have echoed each other's denunciations of the Western powers' "enslavement" of Germany; they have competed with democratic groups in making political capital out of the desire of most Germans to see their country reunited. And while not all the neo-Nazis have joined the Communists in propagandizing for neutralism, many of them have done so. Thus the leader of the Socialist Reich Party, Otto Ernst Remer (who squelched the anti-Hitler plot of July 20, 1944) declared: "The best thing for us to do is to take up posts as traffic policemen and stretch out our arms so that the Russians will be able to march through Germany as quickly as possible."

Moreover, there is at least some

evidence that the Russians have lent a hand to the neo-Nazis — probably on the theory that the latter can serve their ends more effectively than the now thoroughly discredited West German Communists. One of the first important neo-Nazi groups in West Germany, the National Democratic Party of Hesse, was formed at the same time that the Russians were establishing the East Zone National Democratic Party as a vehicle for former Nazi activists. The similarity of name, program, and timing may have been only a coincidence. Many people, however, thought it a peculiar one. And more recently, one of the charges brought against the Socialist Reich Party (formed shortly after the parliamentary elections of 1949) was that it had received financial assistance from the Eastern Zone. In August of the current year this charge was again made, not by one of the party's enemies, but by a member of its executive committee, and caused the temporary suspension of the party chairman, Fritz Dorls. But Dorls soon gained the upper hand again, and the protesting member, Count Wolf von Westarp, resigned from the executive committee and party.

THE GOVERNMENT has used the rather broad powers allowed it by the West German constitution to strike at both Communists and neo-Fascist parties. Communist papers have been repeatedly suppressed for

printing particularly outrageous slanders; Remer and other leaders of the Socialist Reich Party have been tried and imprisoned on similar charges. Moreover, when the Constitutional Court, authorized under the constitution to outlaw antidemocratic parties, was finally established, the government brought charges before it against both the Communists and the S.R.P. The Westarp charge and subsequent resignation occurred while the S.R.P.'s case was before the court. This, and the fact that the court had already granted a preliminary injunction against certain S.R.P. activities, probably convinced the party's leaders that its number was up. So in September, anticipating the judgment of the court, they announced the party's "voluntary dissolution." It was rumored that Remer and Dorls were planning to continue it as an underground organization which they would direct from "abroad" — generally interpreted to mean the Soviet Zone of Germany. The S.R.P.'s members in the federal parliament, however, retain their seats as independents.

At this writing the case of the Communist Party is still before the court. It is doubtful whether the government is really anxious to outlaw it, as the German Communists are not now a political threat. Outlawing of the Communist Party, however, would not solve the problem of the Communist conspiratorial threat — or remove the danger of

an increase in Communist influence at some future time. Nor does the dissolution of the Socialist Reich Party diminish in any significant degree the danger of a neo-Nazi resurgence. For both Communists and Nazis are adept at infiltrating and using other organizations.

THE COMMUNISTS are now following two main tactics: One, the old dodge of the "united front" in order to worm their way into the Social Democratic Party. Thus, they offered the Social Democrats their support in the Hessian legislature (the Social Democrats refused it), and they cast unsolicited votes for the presidential candidacy of the late Dr. Kurt Schumacher. They withdrew their own candidates and instructed their followers to vote Social Democratic in several parliamentary by-elections. At the same time they kept up a running fire of attack against the Social Democratic leaders, while appealing to the Social Democratic rank and file to join with them in the "struggle for peace and German unity." So far, however, they haven't got very far, either with the leaders or with the rank and file. It isn't likely that the Communists will have any success with the Social Democrats, certainly as long as Social Democracy continues to be outlawed in the Soviet Zone.

The second, and much more successful, tactic of the Communists

has been to mobilize neutralist sentiment. The groups on which they have concentrated are to be found mainly among the more conservative elements of German society. They have appealed to Ruhr industrialists by stressing the importance of Eastern markets — and they have taken an active part in arranging the illegal export of strategic materials from West Germany to the East. They have appealed to both the strong pacifist sentiment which is a natural result of the last war's destruction, and to the fear of many Germans that allying West Germany with the NATO powers will cut off all possibility of reuniting it with the Eastern Zone. They have played on the concern of many Protestant churchmen for the fate of predominantly Protestant East Germany, and on their fear of Catholic predominance in the truncated West German Republic. And they have made full use of the many Germans — former military men, intellectuals, diplomats, and "National Bolsheviks" — who for economic or "geopolitical" or nationalist reasons believe that Germany's future lies with the Communist East against the democratic West. In this type of activity, the Communist Party seldom shows its own face. Those who appear as the leaders of these movements are generally people who have never themselves been Communists or Communist sympathizers, but who are persuaded either by

flattery or their own desires that they can find a basis of agreement between East and West. Some of these, such as the former German diplomat Rudolf Nadolny, may well be actual Soviet agents. Others, such as Dr. Martin Niemoeller and former West German Interior Minister Gustav Heinemann, are unquestionably honorable men who are unintentionally but effectively playing the Communist game. Whatever the West German government may do to restrict or prohibit the activities of the Communist Party itself, non-Communist neutralists will probably remain the far more significant instrument of Soviet propaganda.

Like the Communists, the neo-Nazis may be expected to infiltrate other parties if they are deprived of one of their own. Indeed, there are already neo-Nazi elements in several of the parties. There are no neo-Nazis among the Social Democrats, and Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democrats have for the most part succeeded in keeping them out. But the amorphous Refugee Party (*Bund der Heimlosen und Entrechteten*, or B.H.E.) shows neo-Nazi tendencies in some areas, such as Schleswig-Holstein, while in others its leadership appears to be genuinely democratic. The German Party, one of the members of Chancellor Adenauer's coalition, was recently accused of neo-Nazism by its coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party. Actually, the German Party has two

wings. One of them consists of conservative advocates of decentralization, and is led by Heinrich Hellwege. The other is ultra-nationalist and at times shows signs of neo-Nazism. Its leader, Dr. Hans Seebohm, has made speeches whose extreme nationalism led to protests from the Western representatives in Germany. Both Hellwege and Seebohm are members of the Adenauer cabinet. Some neo-Nazi elements are also to be found in the Free Democratic Party, whose affiliates in the various states are almost autonomous. But there can be no doubt that the majority of this party's members follow the leadership of such genuine democrats as West German President Theodor Heuss and Reinhold Maier, Prime Minister of the recently created Southwest State.

WEST GERMANY has certain important assets in the struggle against a totalitarian revival. The Soviet army of occupation in East Germany, and the Communist puppet regime which has been established there, are a standing warning to German voters against the blandishments of the Communists. Similarly, the memory of the destruction which Hitler wrought is a strong antidote to the propaganda of neo-Nazism. Yet German democracy also suffers from certain major weaknesses. While the millions of refugees and expellees who have swarmed

into the Federal Republic from behind the Iron Curtain remain outside West German society, they form a reservoir of discontent and dangerous restlessness. As long as Germany remains divided, the desire for unity will be exploited by demagogues.

And last but not least, the internal weaknesses of the German democratic forces might pave the way to disaster. German political parties today are still more interested in declaiming grandiose phrases and pursuing small partisan advantages than they are in buckling down to the day-to-day problems of the German people. Partly, this is a consequence of the fact that the present parties were formed in the period of occupation, when they were deprived of any real part in major decisions. The habit of shadow boxing which they developed then has persisted, although its cause no longer exists. Indeed, there is a strong tendency on the part of both government and opposition to behave as if the occupation authorities were still settling things, and to avoid the responsibility for solving Germany's domestic problems in domestic terms. And partly, the German govern-

ment and German political parties alike suffer from bureaucratic dry rot and an ingrained deference to seniority which effectively kill any interest that might be aroused in the German youth. This same bureaucracy and pettiness were among the reasons why so many young people passed into the Communist and Nazi folds in the days of the Weimar Republic.

It would be too pessimistic to conclude today that the democratic development of Western Germany will be frustrated in the long run by the totalitarians of the left and right. For some years to come an all-out bid for power by neo-Nazism or Communism is improbable. And there is little danger that Western Germany, in the near future, will become an aggressor again. What might take place, however, is a slow undermining of the basis of German democracy. This could eventually poison the atmosphere to a point where those men who are trying, in Germany's workshops, villages, and universities, to build democracy from the ground up, would be banging their heads against a rebuilt nationalist stone wall.

*At Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
there is raging a "battle of the brains" . . .*

WILL *Machines* REPLACE THE *Human Brain*?

SERGE FLIEGERS

THE placid brown waters of the Charles River, rolling through Cambridge, Massachusetts, bathe what is undoubtedly the most intellectual shore line in this country — the few odd miles that stretch between the stately grey halls of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the bright, crenelated houses of Harvard. This winter, the waters of the Charles are being rippled not only by the harsh winds of the north but also by the echoes of a sizzling controversy between two intellectual giants of our times — Professor Howard Aiken of the Harvard Computation Laboratory and Professor Norbert Wiener of the Department of Mathematics at MIT.

This controversy, somewhat muffled by good-natured academic po-

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liteness, is nevertheless aptly named the "Battle of the Brains." This is because it involves not only the human, or perhaps slightly superhuman cerebral mechanisms of Aiken and Wiener; it is also because, pitched against each other, are two inhuman monsters of reason and logic: The "Mark IV" of Harvard versus the "Whirlwind" of MIT. These two giant electronic computing machines — known commonly as electronic brains — are competing in a race that has so far produced a new science named "Cybernetics" and the promise of another industrial revolution, a revolution that may affect our civilization more profoundly than the steam engine or the atomic bomb.

This correspondent recently completed a tour of the very front line of this unique battle. First stop was the modernistic, red-brick and glass building behind Harvard's Law School, which serves as headquarters



to Professor Aiken, and which is guarded by a sign that says: "Visitors, Keep out." Unlike the sign, Professor Aiken is the soul of hospitality. Pushing aside a large stack of letters from businessmen who want the computing machine to solve their marketing and production problems, the Professor devoted considerable time explaining binary mathematics, differential equations, and showing us around his "baby." There are two "babies," in fact, both about ten feet high and running the entire length of a medium-sized room. One is Mark III built for the Naval Ordnance Bureau by Professor Aiken and the International Business Machines Corporation. The other, Mark IV, has just been completed and was starting to operate as we began our tour. Both machines look like enormous radio sets with their sides torn off. Their entrails show thousands of flickering electronic tubes, capacitors, resistors, switches and bright red and amber control lights. Mark IV receives instructions and gives answers on magnetic tape and has a control booth that looks like a setting for "Space Cadets." Mark III, more old-fashioned, is operated by a roll of perforated paper tape which looks exactly like the roll of a player piano. While we looked on, the tape was being sucked in by the machine and, at one end, an electric typewriter began clattering. Mark III, it seems, was in the process of

writing a book of mathematical equations. It would complete the 300-page book in about three days. A skilled mathematician, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, would take more than a year to accomplish a similar task.

"So this," we remarked innocently, "is the thinking machine."

Professor Aiken, a tall, distinguished-looking and relaxed gentleman, snapped out of his seeming lethargy. Pounding his right fist against his left palm, he explained emphatically: "This is not an electronic brain or a thinking machine. It is merely a computer — fast, accurate — but nothing more than a slavish automatic device designed to help us solve mathematical and mechanical problems."

This question — can machines think? — lies at the very heart of the "Battle of the Brains" controversy. Before approaching this ticklish point, we listened to Professor Aiken explaining what the machines can do, and what they have done.

"During the war, for example, Mark III flew a bomber from Chicago to Los Angeles. First with all four engines going, then with two and even three engines conked out, with different loads, at different altitudes. Today, with Mark IV, we can fire a guided missile and trace its path through the atmosphere under varying conditions." All this, naturally, is not meant in the literal sense. What Mark III

and Mark IV actually do is to take a differential equation representing the physical properties of the plane or missile to be tested, and then subject this equation to various factors representing speed, altitude, and so forth. In practice, this method has saved our government millions of dollars. Previously, plane designers would take "engineering guesses," then construct expensive experimental models which often crashed, losing lives and money. Today, the machine's calculations have taken much of the guesswork out of engineering guesses.

But the machines can perform even more complicated and direct functions. Mark I, the first machine built by Aiken to help him with calculations for his Ph.D thesis, is now running a whole shop of calculating machines. "It does not take too much of a stretch of imagination," the Professor explains, "to see a machine shop run by an electronic computer. And then, you are looking in the direction of an automatic factory. And where we have automatic files stored on magnetic tape, we approach the problem of an automatic office."

No secretaries or typists in this office of tomorrow, just a machine that reads letters by means of a photocell scanning device, delves into its automatic files for the information requested, and then automatically types out a reply. There could be, for example, an automatic

insurance company, calculating premiums, sending out due notices, and crediting payments, all without the help of a single human employee.

AT PRESENT, Professor Aiken is considering a project whereby his machines would produce word-by-word translations from Russian into English. "Then, by increasing the sophistication of the machine," the Professor adds placidly, "we could get a more literary translation."

How are these seemingly human tasks performed by steel-and-glass machines which, according to Professor Aiken, cannot think and are merely slavish and mechanical instruments? For an answer to this we crossed over to headquarters of the opposite camp at MIT. These headquarters proved to be a small, dusty office at the end of a long, dusty corridor. There we found Professor Norbert Wiener, surrounded by books on philosophy, mathematics, biology, politics, physiology and a few twenty-five-cent mysteries. Professor Wiener is an ebullient, barrel-chested man ("my favorite sport in college was wrestling," he explains) with a handsome Vandyke beard and quick, humorous eyes. There was not enough room in the office for the Professor, his pretty secretary, the books and this interviewer, so we went to an unused classroom.

Interviewing Professor Wiener is

not easy. To begin with he is a real, honest-to-goodness genius. He entered Tufts College at the age of eleven, graduated at fourteen and shortly thereafter took his Ph.D. at Harvard. He speaks six languages fluently including Chinese and ancient Greek, and is apt to break into any one of them in the midst of a discussion of the quantum theory, Einstein's role in the modern world or the harmonics of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Nevertheless, with the use of a blackboard and a short course in binary mathematics, Professor Wiener was able to demonstrate some fundamentals of the electronic computing machine.

To explain the workings of this machine it might be easiest to use the methods recently employed by a young British father whose wife pressed him to tell their children the facts of life. Calling the kids into his study, he asked somewhat embarrassedly: "Do you know about the bees and the flowers?"

"No, daddy," they replied blankly. "Well, dash it, do you know how babies are born?" "Certainly," the kids chorused eagerly. "That's wonderful," the relieved father sighed, "it's the same with the bees and the flowers."

In other words, one can understand the working of a mechanical computer by studying the mechanism of the human brain.

Speaking roughly, and oversim-

plifying unmercifully, one might say that our thinking mechanism is composed of a vast system of nerve-fibres that might schematically look like a network of railroad tracks approaching a central station. Along these fibres, or tracks, run tiny pulses, like trains trying to get into the station. At each juncture of two tracks there is a switching point, called a synapse. When our imaginary train arrives at such a synapse, it can be switched right or left, to the next synapse, and so until this pulse—or train—arrives at its proper destination. The switches are controlled by our memory.

Suppose the simple thought of "I want to eat" originates at the beginning of the network. The "eat" pulse will go to the first switch, labeled, let's say, "breakfast." But you have already had breakfast, and your memory of that has closed the "breakfast" switch. So the pulse goes on to the next synapse, marked "lunch." You haven't had lunch yet, so the pulse passes through that open switch to the next juncture, which we can call "sandwich." But the "sandwich" switch is closed because you remember that you're on a diet, and must not eat sandwiches, so the pulse goes on to an open switch marked "salad." And that's what you finally have for lunch.

Multiply the speed of such a process several million times, increase the complexity of the system

a few more billion times, and you'll have a rough inkling of what goes on in a human brain — and in a "thinking machine."

For the machine works on exactly the same system.

INSTEAD of nerve-fibres it has electric wires or, in the case of the Mark IV, electric connections painted on with a ball-point pen to save space. Instead of synapses, the machine has relays and electronic switches called Eccles-Jordan circuits, and nicknamed Flip-Flops by simplicity-loving scientists. These flip-flops are open or shut, according to information stored in the machine at the beginning of each problem. They act as part of the machine's memory, retaining information, wiping it out after it becomes useless by "forgetting" it, and then acquiring new information as the problem progresses. Since these switches have only two positions — either flip or flop — they make only yes or no decisions, relaying a pulse to the next correct switch, or stopping it.

Numbers are stored in these switches by converting decimal figures into binary numbers. The binary system uses only 1 and 0 or, to convert this further into thinking machine lingo, it uses only flip or flop. To store a number, the machine plays a sort of game of twenty questions: Is it 1? No. Is it 2? No. Is it 3? Yes! Letters can be stored this way, too, with the same

twenty-question game principle.

In addition to this, various machines have additional "memories" where information can be stored. "Mark IV" uses a huge magnetized drum. "Whirlwind" at MIT, fastest computer at the time of this writing, uses thirty-two electrostatic storage tubes, each of which holds 2048 sixteen-digit binary numbers, and MIT is installing an additional memory drum.

With simulated nerve-fibres, switches that make unerring decisions, and tapes, drums and tubes that store knowledge, why can't these machines think?

We asked Professor Wiener this question. He shrugged his heavy shoulders: "You could unquestionably duplicate, on a lower level, a large number of phenomena which we associate with thought and the working of the human brain. But when it comes to imitating the human brain . . ."

The professor stopped for a minute to make a quick calculation, then continued: "Look here, we have roughly a million fibres in the brain, each with the ability of making a yes or no decision. Therefore, you've got a storage capacity of 2 to the power of one million. To reproduce so many yes-or-no devices mechanically, you would have to have a machine capacity of about 100,000,000 cu. ft. With so many electronic tubes you would have the temperature of a furnace. . . ."

APPROACHING the subject from the opposite direction, Dr. W. Ross Ashby, Director of Research at Barnwood House, a British Psychiatric Hospital, has just issued an enormously important study entitled "Design for a Brain." Published here by Wiley, the book uses some Cybernetics to explain the brain's amazing ability to adapt itself to an unending stream of different situations. During his research, Ashby constructed a "Homeostat," a small machine designed specifically to imitate basic functions of the brain.

This desire to build a machine like a brain has long been imbedded in man's soul. As far back as 1617 John Napier, Laird of Merchiston, invented an "ingenious contrivance" called Napier's bones, designed "to help man with his logical reckoning." French mathematician Blaise Pascal and German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz also worked on the possibility of constructing a mathematical engine. In view of their concept of mathematics as a supreme form of logic it might well be supposed that such an "engine" might have been used to solve more than just problems of addition and subtraction.

The most ambitious project in this line was undertaken by British inventor Charles Babbage who, in 1833, began work on an "analytic engine" which was supposed to carry out complete computations

according to specific instructions. Babbage's engine raised an intellectual furor in Victorian London and precipitated a metaphysical argument that foreshadowed closely the present controversy on "thinking machines versus brains." At that time Lady Lovelace wrote caustically: "The analytical engine has no pretension to originate anything. . . ." and today, that is the very argument put forward by the anti-Cybernetics faction.

Babbage was never able to prove whether his machine could originate anything. He died before he could even originate a working model of the machine. And the matter rested there until the early days of World War II, when German planes were taking a murderous toll of Allied Shipping. The U. S. Government approached Professor Wiener with a strange request: "We need a mechanism that can point a naval gun at an oncoming plane. It must be able to calculate the speed of the plane, predict its zigzags, take into account wind velocity, and the speed and rolling of the ship. To put it bluntly, the mechanism must do what an expert anti-aircraft gunner does — only better."

Wiener set to work and soon perfected a theory whose full importance has not yet been realized. It is the theory of feedback, or of continuous control mechanism. Wiener used the concept that our muscular actions are not stiff mechanical

movements. Instead, they are flexible and constantly controlled. For example, when we extend a hand to grasp a pencil, our arm does not move rigidly like a mechanical piston or a crane. Our action is flexible, taking into account the speed, force and direction of our moving arm, the pull of gravity, the distance of the pencil, and numerous other factors. If our hand shoots out too far, it is pulled back by this feedback mechanism. If it goes too much to the right or the left, its direction is controlled and it is put back on the right path. When the object we want to grasp is stationary, there is no great problem. But when the object moves, our feedback mechanism goes into high gear, compensating both for our actions and for the movement and timing of the object we are aiming for. That is how a hunter downs a flying duck, and how an anti-aircraft gunner shoots at an enemy plane. Somehow, Wiener managed to incorporate the concept of feedback into the mechanism of a naval artillery piece, and his work is credited with having saved thousands of Allied lives and hundreds of thousands of shipping tons.

At the same time, Wiener's invention went one large step beyond the technique of existing mechanical computing machines.

If these existing machines already showed frighteningly human qualities, Wiener's concept of feedback

started an epidemic of "mechanical brains."

One scientist constructed a machine that could find its way through a maze, another one built a mobile machine with two photo-electric cells on its face, capable of locating a light and going towards it with the sure instinct of a moth approaching a flame. Dr. Claude Shannon, top researcher of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, envisages a computer that can play chess, and he knows of at least one machine in England that does quite well at a game of checkers.

"But," detractors of the "thinking machine" theory argued, "all these machines act only on orders of the scientists handling their controls. They can't act independently."

So a brilliant young mathematician named Anthony Oettinger designed a small computer named Edsac, which he taught to recognize figures independently. He would feed numbers to the machine at random. When Edsac would pick the wrong number, Oettinger would "punish" it by pressing a button marked "punish." When Edsac chose the right number, Oettinger pressed a button marked "reward." Soon little Edsac was blithely picking the right numbers from a long string of jumbled mathematical symbols without help or prompting from its master.

Oettinger explains his work very matter-of-factly: "Edsac picked up

habits very fast. It reacted just like an intelligent animal or a child — except that it made no mistakes. So, just to pursue the analogy, I rigged it up to make occasional mistakes. I even gave it a failing memory.”

“But,” Oettinger adds deprecatingly, “nothing in this stuff is a miracle. Or, if it is, it’s definitely a man-made miracle.”

NEVERTHELESS, the miraculous possibilities of these electronic gadgets have inflamed the imagination of the world. Professor Wiener, as the originator and apostle of the theory that machines might approach some form of thought, is the central figure of the new cult of “Cybernetics” — a term derived by Wiener from the Greek word for helmsman, and used earlier, without Wiener’s knowledge, by French writer Louis Aragon to describe a system of political control.

Publications on Cybernetics are today being issued in England, France, and Italy. When Wiener once went to Geneva to rest from overwork, his Swiss doctor approached him diffidently: “You are the great Professor Wiener, yes?” Wiener, too tired to speak, only nodded.

The doctor smiled: “Would you be so kind and possibly write us a paper about Cybernetics?”

In Paris, Father Dubarle of the Dominican order, is president of a *Cercle Cybernétique*. We asked Pro-

fessor Wiener whether there was any conflict, in his mind, between religion and the new theory of Cybernetics. Wiener mused: “When Pythagoras discovered his theorem of the triangle, he sacrificed a hecatomb, lest the gods be displeased. Now, every time a scientist discovers something new, all the oxen tremble.”

“But,” he continued “what is valid in religion will not suffer from Cybernetics or any other scientific probing. After all, there is still the central mystery of creation.”

With a mischievous look, he pulled his beard: “It reminds me of the story of Frederick the Great and his court preacher. Every Sunday, King Frederick would send the preacher a slip of paper containing the subject upon which the King wanted his sermon preached. One Sunday, to amuse himself, Frederick sent up a blank piece of paper. The poor preacher looked at one side: ‘There is nothing on this side’ he said sadly. Turning over the paper he added: ‘and there is nothing on this side . . .’ Then, facing the King squarely he continued: ‘And from nothing, God created this world . . . !’

“And you know,” Wiener chuckled, “he was quite right!”

Cybernetics may not solve the mystery of creation, but the work of Professors Wiener, Aiken and many others in the field of electronic computing machinery may



well be adding a new problem to our life, the problem of an industrial and a clerical revolution.

Bertrand Russell, prognosticating what the next fifty years may bring, recently wrote: "Most things that are at present done by human beings can be done by robots. Mechanical brains are being rapidly perfected and it is hoped that before long, only experts will be able to distinguish them from live people. If we are to believe Dr. Norbert Wiener we must expect that, within the next fifty years at latest, a fully equipped factory will need only one man to press a button. All the rest will be done by ingenious mechanisms. . . . This will make the work of management much easier and, if the machines can be taught to vote, democracy will at last run smoothly."

It is still a far cry from machines that vote — although Remington Rand's "Univac" was used on election night by a television network to predict the result. But there is no question that electronic computers will move into industry in the very near future. Remington Rand already has seven "Univac" computers working in the field. One of them is being used by the Bureau of the Census. Others can maintain stock records, control inventory and production schedules, make out pay-rolls for a 10,000-man plant and handle mortgage loan accounts.

IBM is even further advanced in

the industrial field, with more than 200 machines out, performing such tasks as locating skilled personnel for the Department of Defense and helping the FBI track down criminals. IBM's brain, by the way, makes a superior sleuth, with the ability to localize, sort and collate data on criminals at the rate of 650 suspects a minute.

**W**HAT EXACTLY will the total impact of all these "brains" be on our civilization? According to Professor Wiener, they will relieve man from the drudgery of tiring, mechanical work, just as the steam shovel relieved man from the drudgery of physical effort. According to Professor Aiken, computers will increase production, increase the standard of living and increase employment. "Look at the telephone," he says. "When the automatic exchange came in, everyone said that telephone girls would lose their jobs. Today there are more telephone operators than ever before."

Both men — temporarily abandoning their academic feud — agree that, if rightly handled, electronic "brains" may bring an economy of plenty and a life of increased leisure.

"But," asks Anthony Oettinger, "the question is whether people will use their new-found leisure to go to church or to go to war. . . ."

# *The Girl of My Dreams*

Bernard Malamud

AFTER MITKA burned the manuscript of his heartbroken novel at the blackened bottom of Mrs. Lutz's rusty trash can in her back yard, although the jolly landlady tried all sorts of bait and schemes to lure him forth, and he could tell as he lay abed, from the new sounds on the floor and the penetrating stench of her cologne that there was an unattached female loose on the premises (wondrous possibility of yore), he resisted all and with a twist of the key locked himself a prisoner in his room, only venturing out, unshaven, after midnight for crackers and tea and an occasional can of fruit, and this went on for too many weeks to count.

The novel had returned to stay in the late fall, after a long year and a half of voyaging among more than two dozen publishers, and he had

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hurled it into a barrel burning autumn leaves, stirring the mess at intervals with a long length of iron pipe, to get the inner sheets afire. Overhead a few dead apples hung like Christmas ornaments upon the tree stripped of leaves. The sparks, as he stirred, flew to the apples, to him representing not only creation gone for nothing (three long years), but all the dead hopes, ultimately even the proud ideas he had given the book; and Mitka, who was not a sentimentalist, felt as if he had burned (it took a thick two hours) an everlasting hollow in himself.

Into the fire also went a sheaf of odd-sized documents (why he had saved them he would never know): copies of letters to literary agents and their replies; mostly, however, printed rejection forms, with perhaps a half dozen typed notes from lady editors, saying they were returning the MS of his novel because — among other reasons, but this prevailed: because of the symbolism,

and the fact that it was obscure. Only one of the ladies had written let us hear from you again. Though he cursed them all to damnation, it did not cause the acceptance of his book. Yet for a year Mitka labored over a new one, up to the time of the return of the old manuscript, when, upon rereading the new work, he discovered that the same symbolism was there and more obscure than ever, so he shoved the second book aside. True, at odd moments he sneaked out of bed to give a new thought a try with his pen, but the words refused to budge; besides he had lost belief that anything he said could make meaning, and if it perhaps did, that it could possibly be conveyed in all its drama to some publisher's reader, uninvolved with creation, in his aseptic office high above the Manhattan streets; so he wrote nothing for months — although Mrs. Lutz actively mourned — and vowed never to write again though he knew the vow was worthless, because he couldn't write anyway, whether he had vowed or no.

SO MITKA sat alone and still in his faded yellow-papered room, with the badly colored Orozco reproduction he had picked up, showing Mexicans bent and suffering, thumb-tacked above the peeling mantle-piece, and stared through sore eyes at the antics of pigeons on the roof of the house across the street; or aimlessly followed traffic — never

people — in the streets; he slept for good or ill a great deal, had dry dreams, some horrific, and awakening, looked long at the ceiling, which never represented the sky unless he imagined it snowing; listened to music if it came from the distance, and occasionally attempted to read some historical or philosophical work, but cast it aside if it lit the imagination and set him to thinking of writing. Several times he cautioned himself, Mitka, this will have to end or you will, but the warning did little to change his ways. He grew wan and thin, and once when he beheld his meager thighs as he dressed, if he were a weeper, he would have wept.

Now Mrs. Lutz, herself a writer — a bad one but always interested in writers and had them in her house whenever she could land one (her introductory inquisition into a prospective roomer's life masterfully sniffed this fact first) even when she could ill afford it — Mrs. Lutz knew all this about Mitka and she daily attempted some unsuccessful ministrations. She tried tempting him down to her kitchen with spry descriptions of lunch: steaming soup, Mitka, with soft white rolls, calf's foot jelly, rice with tomato sauce, celery hearts, delicious breast of chicken — beef if he preferred — and his choice of satisfying goodies; also with fat notes slipped under his door in sealed envelopes marked personal, describing when she was a

little girl, and the intimate details of her sad life since with Mr. Lutz, imploring a better fate on *him*; or she left at the door all sorts of books fished from her ancient library that he never once looked at, magazines with stories marked, "You can do much better than this," and when it arrived, her own copy, for him to read first, of the *Writer's Journal*. All these attempts having this day failed — his door shut (Mitka voiceless) though she had hid in the hall an hour to await its opening — Mrs. Lutz dropped to one horsy knee and with her keyhole eye peeked in: he lay outstretched in bed.

"Mitka," she wailed, "how thin you have grown — a skeleton — it frightens me. Come downstairs and eat."

He remained motionless so she enticed him otherwise: "Here are clean sheets on my arm, let me refresh your bed and air the room."

He groaned for her to go away.

Mrs. Lutz groped a minute. "We have with us a new guest on your floor, girl by the name of Beatrice — a real beauty, Mitka, and a writer too."

He was silent but she knew listening.

"I'd say a tender twenty-one or two, pinched waist, firm breasts, pretty face, and you should see her little panties hanging on the line — like flowers all."

"What does she write?" he solemnly inquired.

Mrs. Lutz found herself in a fit of coughing.

"Advertising copy, as I understand, but she would like to write verse, she says."

He turned away, wordless.

She left a tray in the hall — a bowl of hot soup whose odor nearly drove him mad, two folded sheets, pillow case, fresh towels, and a copy of that morning's *Morning Globe*.

AFTER he had ravished the soup and all but chewed the linen, he tore open the *Globe* to confirm that he was missing nothing. The headlines told him: correct. He was about to crumple the paper and pitch it out the window when he recalled "The Open Globe" on the editorial page, a column he had not for years seen. In the past he had reached for the paper with three cents and trembling fingers for "The Open Globe," come one-come all to the public, to every writer under a rock, inviting their contributions in the form of stories, at five bucks the thousand-word throw. Though he now hated the thought of it, it was his repeated acceptance here — fifteen stories in less than half a year (he had bought a blue suit and a two-pound jar of strawberry jam) — that had started him writing the novel (requiescat); from that to the second abortion, to the impotence and murderous self-hatred that had descended on him now. Open Globe, indeed. He gnashed his teeth but the

holes in them hurt. Yet the not unsweet remembrance of past triumphs — the quarter of a million potential readers every time he appeared in print, all within a single city so that *everybody* knew when he was in (people reading him in buses, at cafeteria tables and park benches, as Mitka, the Young Magician lurking by, watched smiles appear on their faces or searched for tears in their eyes); also flattering letters from publishers, fan letters too, from the most unlikely people — fame is the purr, the yip, the yay. In remembrance he cast a momentary dewy eye upon the column, and having done so, devoured the print.

The story socked in the belly. This girl, Madeleine Thorn, who wrote the piece as “I” — though she only traced herself here and there, she came at once alive to him — he pictured her as maybe twenty-three, slim yet soft-bodied, the face bright with the whiplash of understanding — that Thorn was not for nothing; anyway, there she was that day, running up and down the stairs in joy and terror. She too lived in a rooming house, at work on her novel, bit by bit, nights, after a depleting secretarial grind each day; page by page, each neatly typed and slipped into the carton under her bed. At the very end of the book, a last chapter of the first draft to go, she had one night got out the carton and lay on the bed, rereading, to see if the book had gone as it should have.

Page after page she dropped to the floor and at last fell asleep, worried that she hadn’t got it right, wearied at how much rewriting (this sank in by degrees) she would have to do, when the light of the risen sun struck her eyes and she pounced up, realizing she had forgotten to set the alarm. With a sweep of the hand she shot the typewritten sheets under the bed, washed, ran a comb through her hair, and slipped on a fresh dress. Down the stairs she ran and out the house.

At work, strangely a good day: the novel again came together in her mind and she memo’d what she’d have to do — not very much, really, to make it the decent book she had hoped to write. Home, happy, holding flowers, to be met on the first floor by the landlady, flouncing and all smiles: guess what I’ve gone and done for you today: describing new curtains, matching bedspread, a rug no less, to keep your tootsies warm in the morning, and surprise! the room spring-cleaned from top to bottom. Oh my God. The girl tore up the stairs. Falling on her hands and knees in her room she searched under the bed: an empty carton. Downstairs like dark light. Where, landlady, are the typewritten papers that were under my bed? She spoke with her hand to her throat. “Oh, those that I found on the floor, honey? I thought you meant for me to sweep them out and so I did.” Madeleine: “Are they in the garbage, perhaps?”

—I—don't believe they collect it till Thursday." "No, love, I burned them in the barrel this morning. You should have seen the smoke they made, my eyes watered for an hour." Curtain. With a groan Mitka collapsed on the bed.

HE WAS CONVINCED it was every bit of it true. He saw the crazy dame dumping the manuscript into the barrel and stirring it until every blessed page was aflame. He groaned at the burning—years of precious work. The tale haunted him. He wanted to escape it—leave the room and abandon the dismal memory of misery, but where could he go and what do without a penny in his pocket? So he lay on the bed and whether awake or asleep dreamed the recurrent dream of the burning barrel (in it their books commingled), suffering her suffering as well as his own. The barrel, a symbol he had never conceived before, belched word-flame, shot sparks, poured smoke as thick as oil. It turned red hot, a sickly yellow, black—loaded high with the ashes of human bones—guess whose. When his imagination finally calmed, a sorrow for her afflicted him. The last chapter—irony of it. He yearned all day to assuage her grief, express sympathy in some loving word or gesture, and assure her she would write it again, only better. Around midnight he could bear his thoughts no longer. He thrust a sheet of paper into the

portable, twirled the roller and in the strange stillness of the house clacked out to her a note c/o the *Morning Globe*, expressing how sorry he was—a writer himself—but don't give up, write it again. Sincerely, Mitka. He found an envelope and sticky stamp in his desk drawer. Against his better judgment, he sneaked out and mailed it.

Immediately he regretted it. Was he in his right mind? *All right*, so he had written to her, but what if she wrote back? Who wanted, who needed a correspondence? He simply hadn't the strength for it. Therefore he was glad there continued to be no mail—not since he had burned his book last November, and this was February. Yet on the way out to forage for some food at night, ridiculing himself, holding a lit match he peered into the mailbox. The next night he felt inside the slot with his fingers: empty: served him right. Silly business. He had all but forgotten her story; that is, he thought of it less each day. Yet if the girl by some mischance should write, Mrs. Lutz usually opened the box and brought up whatever mail herself—any excuse to waste his time. The next morning he heard the courier carrying her bulk lightly up the stairs and knew the girl had answered. Steady, Mitka. Despite a warning to himself of the dream world he was in, his heart pounded as the old tease coyly knocked. He did not answer. Gurgling, "For you,

Mitka darling," she at last slipped it under the door — her favorite pastime (he tried to make a symbol of it and failed). Waiting till she had moved on so as not to give her the satisfaction of hearing him go for it, he sprang from the bed and tore the envelope open. "Dear Mr. Mitka (a most feminine handwriting): Thank you for the expression of your kind sympathy, sincerely, M.T." That was all, no return address, no nothing. Giving himself a horse bray he dropped the business into the basket. He brayed louder the next day: there was another epistle: the story was not true — she had invented every single word of it; but the truth was she was lonely, and would he care to write again?

NOTHING comes easy to Mitka but he eventually wrote to her. He had plenty of time and nothing else to do. He told himself he had answered her letter because she was lonely — all right because they both were. Ultimately he admitted that he wrote because he couldn't do the other kind of writing and this, though he was no escapist, solaced him a little. Mitka sensed that although he had vowed never to go back to it, he hoped the correspondence would return him to the book he had abandoned. (Sterile writer seeks end of sterility through satisfying epistolary intercourse with lady writer.) Clearly then, he was trying with these letters to put an

end to his impotence, the hatred of self for not working, for having no ideas, for cutting himself off from them. Ah, Mitka. He sighed at the revelation of this weakness: to depend on others. Yet though his letters were often harsh, bitter, provocative, even unkind, they drew from her warm responses, receptive, soft, willing; and so it was not long (who can resist it? he bitterly assailed himself) before he had brought up the subject of their meeting. He broached it first and she (with reluctance) gave in, for wasn't it better, she had asked, not to intrude the person?

The meeting was arranged for a Monday evening at the branch public library near where she worked — her own bookish preference; himself, he would have chosen the freedom of a street corner. She would, she said, be wearing a sort of reddish babushka. Now Mitka found himself actively wondering what she looked like. Her letters showed her as sensible, modest, honest but what of the body? Though he liked his women to be lookers, he guessed she was not. Partly from hints dropped by her and partly his intuition. He pictured her as comely yet hefty. What of it so long as she was womanly, intelligent, brave? A man like him had need of something special.

The March evening was zippy outside but cupped in it the breath of spring. Mitka opened both windows and allowed the free air to blow on him. About to go — there



came a quick knock on the door. He hesitated, suspicious — Mrs. Lutz knew everybody's business — seemed to sniff it out of the mail. "Telephone," a girl's voice sang out. Probably the advertising Beatrice. He waited till he was sure she was gone then unlocked the door and cautiously stepped into the hall for his first phone call of the year. As he picked up the receiver a crack of light showed in the corner. He stared and the door shut tight. The landlady's fault: she built him up among the roomers as a sort of freak: "my writer upstairs."

"Mitka?" It was Madeleine.

"Speaking."

"Mitka, do you know why I'm calling?"

"How should I know?"

"I'm half drunk on wine."

"Save it till later."

"Because I am afraid."

"What are you afraid of?"

"I do so love your letters and would hate to lose them. Do we have to meet?"

"Yes," he hissed.

"Suppose I am not what you expect?"

"Leave that to me."

She sighed. "All right then —"

"You'll be there?"

No sound from her.

"Don't frustrate me now."

"No, Mitka." She hung up.

**S**ENSITIVE KID. He plucked his very last buck out of the drawer and

quickly left the room to hurry there before she could change her mind and leave. But Mrs. Lutz, in a flannel bathrobe, caught him at the bottom of the stairs. Her gray hair wild, her voice broken. "Mitka, why have you shunned me so long? I have waited months for a single word. How can you be so cruel to me?"

"Please." He shoved her aside and ran out of the house. Nutty dame. The balmy current in the air swept away the unpleasantness, carried a sob to his throat. He walked briskly, more alive than for many a season.

The library was an ancient stone structure. He searched in circulation amid rows of books on sagging floors but found only the yawning librarian. The children's room was dark. In reference, a lone, middle-aged female sat at a long table, reading; on the table stood her bulky market bag. Mitka surveyed the room and was turning to seek elsewhere when a monstrous insight tore at his scalp: *this was she!* He stared unbelievably; his heart sank, then he was filled with violent rage. Hefty she was but yes, eyeglassed, and marvellously plain; Christ, didn't know color even — the babushka a sickly running orange. Ah, colossal trickery — was ever man so cruelly defrauded? His impulse was to flee, escape into the breathable air but she held him there by serenely reading the printed page — (sly one, she knew a tiger was loose in the room.) Had she for a split second gazed up with waver-

ing lids he'd have bolted sure; instead she buttoned her eyes to the book and let him duck if he so willed. This infuriated him further. Who wanted charity from the old lady? Mitka strode (with much misery) toward her table.

"Madeleine?" He mocked the name.

She looked up with a shy and stricken smile. "Mitka?"

"The same —" He bowed low.

"Madeleine is my daughter's name, which I borrowed for my story. Mine is Olga really."

A pox on her lies — yet he hopefully asked, "Did she send you?"

She smiled sadly. "No, I am the one. Sit, Mitka."

He sat sullenly, harboring murderous thoughts: to hack her to pieces and incinerate the remains in Mrs. Lutz's rubbish can.

"They'll be closing soon," she said. "Where shall we go?"

He was motionless, still stunned.

"I know a beer place around the corner where we can refresh ourselves," Olga suggested.

She buttoned a drab coat over a gray sweater. At length he rose. She got up too and followed him, hauling the market bag, down the stone steps.

In the street he took the bag — it felt full of rocks — and trailed her hopelessly around the corner into the beer joint.

Along the wall opposite the beat-up bar ran a grim row of dark booths.

Olga sought one in the rear.

"For peace and privacy."

He laid the bag on the table. "The place smells."

They sat facing each other. He grew increasingly depressed at the thought of spending the evening with her. The irony of it — immured for months in a rat hole, to come forth for this. He'd go back now and entomb himself forever.

SHE removed her coat. "You'd have liked me when I was young, Mitka. I had a sylphlike figure and glorious hair. I was much sought after by men. I was not what you would call sexy but they knew I had it."

Mitka looked away.

"I had verve and a quality of wholeness. I loved life. In many ways I was too rich for my husband. He couldn't understand my nature and this caused him to leave me — mind you, with two small children."

She saw he was not listening. Olga sighed and burst into tears.

The waiter came.

"One beer. Bring the lady wine."

She used two handkerchiefs. One to blow her nose in and the other to dry her eyes.

"You see, Mitka, I told you so."

Her humility touched him. "Yes," he said. Why had he, the fool, not listened?

She gazed at him with smiling eyes. Without glasses she looked better.

"You're exactly the way I pictured you except for your thinness, which surprises me."

Olga reached into her market bag and brought out several packages. She unwrapped bread, sausages, herring, cheese, soft salami, pickles and a large turkey drumstick.

"Sometimes I favor myself with these little treats. Eat, Mitka."

Another landlady. But he ate, grateful she had provided an occupation.

The waiter brought the drinks. "What's this, a picnic?"

"We are writers," Olga said.

"The boss will be pleased."

"Never mind him, eat, Mitka."

He ate listlessly. A man had to live. Or did he. He wasn't sure. He wasn't sure when he had felt this low. Probably never.

Olga sipped her wine. "Eat, it's self-expression."

He expressed himself by managing to finish what was left of the salami, also half the loaf of bread, some cheese and herring. Despite himself his appetite grew. Searching within her bag Olga brought out a package of sliced corned beef and a pear. He made a sandwich of the meat. On top of that the beer was tasty.

"How is the writing going now, Mitka?"

Mitka stopped drinking. He lowered the glass but changed his mind and gulped the rest.

"Don't speak of it."

"Do you try every day?"

"No."

"Believe me, Mitka, things will change. Be patient."

"Yeah."

"Be upbeat, not down. Work every day."

He gnawed the turkey drumstick.

"That's what I do. I've been writing for almost twenty-one years and sometimes it gets so bad — for one reason or another — that I can't get started again for weeks. But what I do then is to relax for a short while and then change to another story. After the second one is moving along and my juices are flowing again, I go back to the first and usually that starts off once more. Or sometimes I discover that it isn't worth bothering with. After you've been writing as long as I have, you'll learn a system to keep yourself working. It depends on a view of life. If you're a mature person you'll get there, Mitka, believe me."

"My writing is all screwed up."

"You'll invent your way out."

THEY SAT a while longer. Olga told him of her childhood. She would have talked more but Mitka was restless. He was wondering what to do with himself. Where would he drag that dead cat, his soul?

Olga put what was left of the food into the market bag.

In the street he asked where to.

"The bus, I guess. I live on the other side of the river with my son, his vinegary wife and their little

daughter."

He took her bag — a lighter load — and walked with it in one hand, a cigarette in the other, toward the bus terminal.

"I wish you'd known my daughter, Mitka."

"So why not?" he said hopefully. He was surprised that he had not taken up the subject of the daughter, because she had all the time been in the back of his mind.

"She had flowing hair and a sweet hourglass figure. You'd have loved her."

He was suspicious of the past tense. "What's the matter, is she married?"

"She died at twenty — at the fount of life. All my stories are actually about her. Someday I'll collect twenty of the best and take them around to see if I can get them published. I'll call the book *Madeleine*."

He all but crumpled, then walked unsteadily. For Madeleine he had this night come out of his burrow to hold her against his lonely heart, but she had burst into fragments, a meteor in reverse, scattered against the far-flung sky, while he walked below, a man mourning.

They came at last to the terminal and Mitka put Olga on the bus.

"Will we meet again, Mitka?"

"Better no," he said.

"But why not?"

"It makes me sad."

"Won't you write either? You'll

never know what your letters meant to me. I was like a young girl waiting for the mailman in the morning."

"Who knows?" He got off the bus.

She called him to the window.

"Don't worry about your work, and get more fresh air."

His face showed nothing.

"Character is what counts in the pinches, of course properly mixed with talent. When you saw me in the library and stayed there I thought, there is a man of character."

Mitka said, "Good night."

"Good night, my dear. Write soon."

She sat back in her seat and the bus roared out of the depot. As it turned the corner she waved from the window.

Mitka went the other way. He was momentarily uneasy, until he realized there were no pangs of hunger. On what he had eaten tonight he could live for a week. Mitka, the camel.

SPRING. It suddenly gripped and held him. Though he fought the intimacy he was the night's prisoner as he moved toward Mrs. Lutz's.

He thought of the old girl. He thought he'd go home now and drape her from head to foot in white. They would jounce together up the stairs and he would swing her (strictly a one-marriage man) over the threshold, holding her where the fat overflowed her corset as they waltzed around in his writing chamber.

Ben B. Seligman

# The Satellite Squeeze

*Soviet Exploitation in Eastern Europe*

FOR CENTURIES the Danube basin has been one of the most important agricultural areas of Europe. Together with Poland, lying immediately northeast of this region, the countries of the Danube basin — Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia — produced wheat, corn, oilseeds, fruits, tobacco, wines, eggs, and meat in quantities that were more than enough to feed their own populations. In spite of relatively low yields and primitive techniques, these countries had left, at the end of their harvest season, a fairly substantial export surplus whose sale gave them money with which to buy industrial goods.

After Yalta, with all of Eastern Europe either already a part of the Soviet empire or about to become so, it was widely expected that the Danube basin would serve as the

Ben B. Seligman, who has contributed to various magazines, is an economist and close student of Soviet industrialization.

main source of food and raw materials for a gigantic Soviet Russian industrial complex.

Yet the reports seeping out from behind the Iron Curtain belie this expectation of an Eastern European agricultural colony feeding the Russian imperial center. Dispatches from Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest tell the same story of a catastrophically deteriorating food situation, caused by a frantic Soviet drive to industrialize the Danube basin. For the simple fact of the matter is that Moscow isn't making a breadbasket of Eastern Europe; on the contrary, it is doggedly insisting on setting up factories throughout this region in order to build the kind of economic strength it believes it must have.

Such statistics as we have on the subject testify to the fact that Soviet Russia and her satellites are on the whole industrially poor. The Soviets simply do not make enough capital goods to take care of their own needs, let alone those of the

satellite states. Russia, for all her five-year plans, remains a predominantly agricultural country, and despite the inhuman pace she set to recoup wartime industrial losses, is in no position to furnish industrial assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe.

**T**HIS ALTERS the conventional relation of home country to colony. According to the textbook version of imperialism, the highly industrialized center milks its conquered backward regions for food and raw materials. In the case of Russia, however, a backward imperial power looks upon her colonies as a new source of industrial sustenance, taking from them whatever she can get. The home country in such a situation not only welcomes but demands (as did Japan in Manchuria in the thirties) an intensive development of industry in the area it dominates. The Soviet Union's obsessive concern to reduce the industrial gap between it and the Western nations, especially the United States, causes it to look upon the satellites as extensions of the homeland. Industries must be developed wherever possible, regardless if poverty, bureaucratic bungling, and the worship of giantism make this an uneconomic policy.

Forced-draft industrialization imposes an intolerable strain on the already overburdened economies of the Eastern European satrapies.

Bulgaria, for example, a satellite which many thought would be allowed to go its agricultural way, was recently ordered to complete the construction of its first iron and steel mill. Although she possesses some iron and coal deposits, they are hardly enough for an efficient and economical manufacture of steel. The new Bulgarian mill, which is being built at Dimitrov, near Sofia, will have the infinitesimal capacity of some 10,000 tons a year. On the producing of these few paltry tons of steel Bulgaria must employ men and resources which, if they were used to promote agriculture, would help to raise living standards. But Moscow cares as little about the living standards of its colonials as it does about those of its own people. What it cares about are the industrial resources, however insignificant, which go to creating military strength. And so Bulgarian peasants who would be better employed behind a plow must tend blast furnaces.

Hungary this year was ordered to raise its aluminum production to 33,000 tons per annum, or twenty times the prewar output. Half the aluminum ore that Hungary produces must be shipped to Russia. Undoubtedly this aluminum will go into the manufacture of airplanes — an aluminum pot is unheard of behind the Iron Curtain. If Hungary meets these demands, it will add from fifteen to twenty per cent to

Russia's own output of aluminum.

Eastern Europe in general is being compelled to expand its production of armaments, in accordance with Soviet plans. Hungary's increase in war spending in 1951, for example, was equal to three per cent of her national income in 1950. The magnitude of Eastern Europe's economic burden is all the more impressive when we realize that this percentage increase is the same as the increase in total American productivity in a normally prosperous year.

Such industrialization contributes nothing to the economic welfare of the Bulgarian and Hungarian peoples. Many of their peasants who used to labor in the sun now make heavy industrial goods that move eastward into Russia; but in return for these goods the Soviet Union gives Hungary and Bulgaria, not added quantities of food, but unessential small industrial items for which she charges exorbitant prices. It is a repetition of Nazi Germany's bullying practice of taking tons of wheat for carloads of aspirin, except that Russia insists on manufactured and not agricultural products.

Soviet Russia's industrialization of its satellites, though it is an indirect form of exploitation, is as effective as the direct exploitation of the labor camps. Moreover, an unfailing consequence of Soviet-style industrialization is inflation, which oftentimes the satellite governments

seek to cure by means that are themselves exploitative.

HOW DOES this inflation come about? The new factories find their labor force among the peasants, whose departure for the cities leaves fewer hands to till the soil. The government must then demand higher grain deliveries to feed this larger urban working class which now possesses more purchasing power than it had in the past. But with crops declining as the result of agricultural chaos and poor weather (a general phenomenon throughout Eastern Europe in 1950 and early 1951), the lessened food supply and increased demand have but one result — inflation. When this happens, a mad search for scapegoats begins: "speculators" are expropriated and "deviationists" are discovered on every side.

Inflation has the satellite authorities worried. Even the powerful central control which they can bring to bear is helpless in the face of a wildcat inflation. A favorite deflationary device employed by the Communist regimes is currency devaluation. This is also a nice way to kill off those middle classes which the Communist authorities (very safely) "predict" are dying. Under this scheme all existing money is wiped out and a new unit is introduced at a fraction of what the former currency was worth. In Bulgaria, for example, the old *lev* was



converted last May into new *leva* at the rate of 100 to one. Businessmen's bank accounts were penalized even more drastically; they were converted at a rate of 200 to one. At the same time taxes were revalued at 25 to one, thus hiking them from four to eight times. This "reform," which wiped out the savings of every independent artisan and farmer in Bulgaria, was carried out with Draconian rigor by the same Soviet experts who devalued the Russian currency in 1947.

The so-called "worker-peasant" alliances which the Communists established when they took over have been severely strained by the countryside's failure to feed the cities, and the cities' failure to supply the countryside with manufactured goods. Farmers just don't grow enough to meet the swollen official food quotas, while the satellite officials for their part are forbidden by the Russians to slacken the pace of industrialization.

Agricultural production is the most difficult problem facing the Communist regimes. Farm productivity in Eastern Europe has always been low: it is something like one quarter of that of Western Europe. Some authorities ascribe this to the fact that Eastern Europe's farms must support a larger population per acre; in addition, there is the scarcity of draft animals and livestock, fertilizer and mechanized equipment. Consequently, the

farmer is hard put to it to supply the needs of urban centers and the demands of Communist bosses, who in a frenzy to make the wheels of industry turn faster have only one answer to the food shortage — collectivization.

**B**UT the peasant will raise enough crops only if he is given a private and personal stake in the business of farming. This the satellite bureaucrats cannot possibly permit, since orthodox Stalinism has it as an article of faith that the private farmer — the kulak — is a kind of devil to be pitilessly exorcised. Thus the satellite governments are on the horns of a dilemma: failure to collectivize agriculture lays them open to a charge of heresy, while too rigid an adherence to Moscow's dictates alienates the peasantry and threatens the food supply.

In Rumania, the recent political shake-up that ended the careers of several prominent Communists can be traced directly to a deteriorating agricultural situation. When last January's currency reform failed to lessen food shortages, reduce inflation, or increase production — its stated objectives — Finance Minister Vasili Luca and Communist boss Ana Pauker were accused of sabotaging the reform and got the ax.

At Moscow's command, only ten per cent at most of Rumania's capital investment goes into farming, while fifty per cent or more goes

into industry, so it is not surprising that there are food shortages. The Rumanian government complains that the peasants are boycotting the state trading organizations, which act as food collection agencies; the latter, on the other hand, lack the kerosene, sugar, salt, textiles, and matches which would make it possible for them to do business with the peasants.

THE government's answer to "peasant obstinacy" is forced collectivization and larger delivery quotas. The food collections are especially onerous as they are based not on yield but on the size of the farm. Where the land is particularly fertile, the quota is increased. The larger independent farmer is often assessed as much as thirty per cent more than other farmers, while the collectives are given much smaller quotas.

The purpose in this is obviously to crush Rumania's independent farmers, and to accumulate enough food reserves to prevent a repetition of last year's collection fiasco. The independent farmer who gives up the struggle and joins a collective soon finds that he is nothing more than a hired hand in a state-controlled enterprise, with his wages pushed down to the point where his entire family must go to work if they are to subsist. But this still doesn't solve the food shortage problem.

THE ORGANIZATION of agriculture in the satellite countries today, with collective farms rubbing elbows with private holdings, resembles that of Russia around 1927. Indeed, the satellite economies are bewildering mixtures of small private enterprises, nationalized industries, individual peasant holdings, and partly socialized farms. They are what you might call "churken-doose" economies, after that famous animal which was neither chicken, turkey, duck, nor goose.

Socialized agriculture is most advanced in Bulgaria, where half the arable land is held by collectives. In Czechoslovakia, the proportion is 18 per cent; in Rumania, 15 per cent; and in Poland collective farms account for 16 per cent of the total value of agricultural produce. From the Kremlin's point of view this is not a satisfactory picture, for only if collectivization is complete can the satellites be fully exploited.

The peasants' answer to universal collectivization would be no different from what it was in the Ukraine in 1933, when thousands of cows, pigs, and other livestock were slaughtered by their owners in preference to giving them up to the commissars. As if to anticipate this, the satellite governments have centered their attack on the wealthier peasants in an effort to win the support of the smaller farmers. But it is the large farmer who is most needed to overcome the food shortage, for he

is more efficient, tills the larger acreage, and harvests the bigger crop. Yet the pressure on him is increasing, and forced collectivization *à la Russe* will undoubtedly be resorted to in spite of all the risks of such a course.

Poland has been staggering along in a food crisis since the drought of 1950, the worst the country had suffered in over a century. The larger independent farmers still own fifteen per cent of Poland's arable land; the acreage tilled by state and collective farms is a good deal less. The Polish government, like the other satellite governments, is afraid to move too drastically against the peasant lest he become even more disaffected and the food shortage grow worse. President Bierut recently proclaimed socialized agriculture to be the goal of all good Communists, at the same time that he warned against "left-deviationist" speed in collectivizing the countryside. The satellite authorities may very well fear the outbreak of peasant revolts.

**L**ITTLE is known about the industrial situation behind the Iron Curtain; official reports and statistics are simply not available. It is evident, however, that the satellite governments are being constantly prodded by their Russian overlords to drive their workers at a harder pace. Resistance takes the form of absenteeism, which reached epi-

demical proportions in 1950 throughout Soviet Russia's Eastern European empire.

Last January Rakosi of Hungary charged that labor was not only lazy, but hostile to the regime. He accused foremen and managers of leniency and disregard of regulations. In Rumania, workers were bound like serfs to their jobs last November when transfers were forbidden except with state approval. This was following the example of its Russian "neighbor," which tied workers to their jobs as far back as 1936.

Even Czechoslovakia, the most advanced of the Iron Curtain countries, has its industrial headaches. Last fall the government ordered some 80,000 white-collar workers into factories, in a frantic effort to step up production. It is plain that the Czech five-year plan was running into many difficulties. To reach the impossibly high production goals, the state moved workers from one place to another, did away with overtime pay, and introduced the speed-up. Even the miners' Saturday half-day holiday was abolished, something that not even the Nazis ventured to do under their occupation. Czechoslovakia's economic troubles are continually exacerbated by the Kremlin's demand for low-priced imports from Prague, which they "pay" for in high-priced exports from Russia.

Russia's exploitation of the satel-

lites is most blatantly exhibited in foreign trade. There is a clear-cut trend in these relations toward a kind of regional autarchy, with the Soviet giant coldly dictating terms to its satrapies. The dollar volume of exports moving from Russia to the Eastern European nations increased by over 2,000 per cent between 1938 and 1948, while shipments to Russia rose by more than 800 per cent in the same decade. This, however, does not include the massive flow of reparation payments from the Danubian countries to the Soviet Union.

But more important than this huge rise in trade volume are the prices of the articles that Russia demands for itself. After his break with Moscow, Tito remarked, with some bitterness, that there was "capitalist trade among socialist nations." "Capitalist" traders, however, are on equal bargaining terms; whereas to apply the term "trade" to Soviet-satellite dealings is to conceal naked rapine under a polite euphemism.

The Polish-Soviet trade agreement, for example, called for Poland to deliver some twelve million tons of coal annually (later reduced to seven million tons) at a price of \$1.25 a ton! At the same time Sweden and Denmark offered to pay as much as \$16 a ton. When the Czechs bought 600,000 tons of wheat from the Soviets in 1948 they were compelled to pay \$4 a bushel, even

though the United States was selling wheat in the world market at \$2.50 a bushel. In the same year Russia obtained 80 per cent of Bulgaria's tobacco crop at a price so low that she was able to turn around and undersell Bulgaria in the Italian market by 35 per cent! The next year (Stalin and Tito were still talking to each other) Russia acquired molybdenum from Yugoslavia for 45,000 dinars a ton, although the cost of mining and processing this important metal was close to 500,000 dinars a ton. These cases illustrate the ruthless character of Russian imperialist exploitation of Eastern Europe.

IT IS CLEAR by now that the Stalin regime doesn't waste a thought on the well-being of the "people's democracies." The fiction that these unhappy lands are independent is kept up (even to the point of passing off the Russian marshal commanding the Polish army as a Polish citizen) because this strengthens the Soviet hand in the international poker game: witness the United Nations. But, in actuality, the Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Rumanians are no more free than the Byelorussians or Ukrainians. The satellite economies are "co-ordinated" with Russian state planning in order to strengthen the Kremlin's drive to world power. As one keen observer noted at the end of World War II, "There is strong reason for

expecting nationalization of industry in all countries in which Russia is free to act . . . for a nationalized industry is easier to manage and to exploit for a conqueror and cannot become a center of opposition."

Essentially the same policy is applied to the peasant. Collectivization is a way for the Kremlin to police the Eastern European countryside so as to exploit it the better. Indus-

trialization, no matter how uneconomic it may be, is made obligatory so as to increase Soviet strength.

Within the Soviet scheme of things the unfortunate satellites find themselves more and more subjected to the totalitarian squeeze. Their usefulness, to Moscow, is that of those victims in ancient Carthage who went to feed the maw of a gigantic Moloch.

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### ***The Terrible Silence***

» And now the terrible silence came between them once again.

The marvellous hills were blooming in the dusk. We shall not come again. We never shall come back again.

Without speech now they faced each other, without speech they knew each other. In a moment Eliza turned quickly from him and with the queer unsteady steps with which she had gone out from the room where Ben lay dying, she moved toward the door.

He rushed back across the walk and with a single bound took the steps that mounted to the porch. He caught the rough hands that she held clasped across her body, and drew them swiftly, fiercely, to his breast.

"Good-bye," he muttered harshly. "Good-bye! Good-bye, mama!" A wild, strange cry, like that of a beast in pain, was torn from his throat. His eyes were blind with tears; he tried to speak, to get into a word, a phrase, all the pain, the beauty, and the wonder of their lives — every step of that terrible voyage which his incredible memory and intuition took back to the dwelling of her womb. But no word came, no word could come; he kept crying hoarsely again and again, "Good-bye, good-bye."

She understood, she knew all he felt and wanted to say, her small weak eyes were wet as his with tears, her face was twisted in the painful grimace of sorrow, and she kept saying:

"Poor child! Poor child! Poor child!" Then she whispered huskily, faintly: "We must try to love one another."

FROM THOMAS WOLFE, *Look Homeward, Angel*, Scribner's, 1929.

## IN OUR READERS' OPINION

### THE KOREAN PROPOSAL

» Senator Bridges "Positive Proposal for Korea" in your November issue is, for the most part, a sensible and easily comprehended article.

He faces reality when he recognizes that the cause of America is at stake, that we are actually in WW-3 now, and that we must continue to fight until the communist legions are disarmed.

He deals too lightly with the roles of Roosevelt, Stilwell, Marshall and the I.P.R. in our loss of prestige in Asia. Their joint actions were responsible for our sorry plight in 1947 and 1950—and to dismiss the evacuation of S. Korea with a limp statement of not enough troops to be garrisoned there is merely a cover-up for dereliction of duty on the part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who should have understood the dangers. That was what they were paid for.

Likewise he obscures the basic issue of constitutional abrogation when he excuses Truman for throwing us into a communist war trap on the assumption that Congress might have authorized the conflict anyway!

Even more important than the reviving of a fighting spirit for freedom which will encourage the enslaved masses everywhere, is the critical need for our leaders, in the military as well as in our government, to acknowledge right from wrong and to steadfastly set

their course on the right track. We cannot be strong and set a courageous example for others if we condone treachery in our midst. The only way to remove that treachery is to drive the uncensored spear of full public exposure into those individuals who have sold us short.

A. G. BLAZEY, M.D.  
WASHINGTON, INDIANA

» I have just read a copy of your wonderful magazine for the first time. While browsing through the magazine rack in the corner newsstand last week, I happened upon the AMERICAN MERCURY and was interested in the titles of the articles so bought one.

After reading the November issue from cover to cover I felt that I had a much clearer idea of many things that had been troubling me. I want to thank you for the wonderful, understandable reading matter published in your magazine.

I now feel that I know much more about the many confusing issues facing us today. I especially liked Senator Styles Bridges "Korea—A Positive Proposal" and "The Primacy of Politics."

Sidney Hook's article "What Is Guilt By Association" reflected my own opinions on this moot subject. I am entirely in sympathy with Senator

McCarthy and sincerely believe that he is a man of great patriotism who is trying against great odds to bring to America the realization of what Communism is doing in this country.

RUTH JOHNSTON  
ROME, NEW YORK

### LAMONT DENIAL

» I wish to deny categorically the fantastic statement by Mr. Julian Maxwell in your November, 1952, issue that I led Frederick V. Field into the Communist Party. I do not pretend to know what political organizations Mr. Field belongs to or does not belong to. But I have never advised him or anyone else to join the Communist Party, with which I have always disagreed on many fundamental issues in fields as varying as philosophy, religion, science, history, civil liberties, politics and international relations.

It remains true that I have been a personal friend of Mr. Field since we were at Harvard College together, that I admire his courage and integrity, and that I stand with him against the reckless defamers who today make a lucrative new racket out of slander and witch-hunts.

CORLISS LAMONT  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

### CHAPLIN'S FREEDOM

» This makes me guilty of only three fan letters in my life. First to Saturday Post about a story of Denver; next, to Walter Winchell for no reason at all as I see it now, and this, inspired by William Bradford Huie's "Mr. Chaplin and

the Fifth Freedom" in current *Merc.*

I think I know artistry when I see it. What a job of shrinking this midget mime, who likes to be a target of the big guns, to a mere blow-fly speck on a limburger cheese wrapper!

Like all little souls who are big egotists, Chaplin loves to hear the big guns thunder as much as Drew Pearson likes to be called the biggest liar in America by Presidents, with Truman being more specific and to the (exclamation) point.

We shoot off our pop gun with this conviction. All artistry comes from the artist's soul — he has to have one if he be an artist. This soulless socialist is Poe's jester sticking a match to his king as he wriggles suspended from the ceiling, trying to make his audience think he is Pagliacci in "Limelight" — one of the times he was very funny.

"Draughts of Old Bourbon," served by Mr. Huie, was spiked to our taste — and we always quaff it with an "ah."

G. A. COMPTON  
RANSON, WEST VIRGINIA

» May I suggest, after "Mr. Chaplin and the Fifth Freedom," something entitled "Mr. Huie and the Sixth Freedom"? Freedom from Huie.

That would spare us the tedious humor of a man whose arrogance and hatred of another man is so obvious that any attempt to appear impartial is a joke — but a very sad and lame one.

Do you really think that you can hurt a man whose name and art is endeared to all the human race? Then why, I wonder, do you make yourself foolish trying to do just that?

NORMAN ROSS  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



**CREEPING SOCIALISM**

» Economic determinism may play as small a part in the world Russian communist movement as Mr. Burnham says but the creeping socialism that we have in our colleges and government is a more insidious menace and it seems to the writer that has an economic origin. We have had ever since Plymouth and Jamestown many Brook Farms, Oneidas and Bellamies promoted by minorities but never until the depression of the thirties did collectivism capture the federal government. Is not our will to resist this largely weakened and confused by a subconscious suspicion that there is something impractical about our "capitalism?" If we were to examine the explanation of depressions and poverty offered by Henry George we might acquire a positive faith in free enterprise with which to combat paternalism, controls, etc. Georgists admit the basic imperfection of the kind of so-called free enterprise we have had and insist that just taxation would produce an equality of opportunity which would cut the ground from under the advocates of a planned economy or any partial approach to that fallacious doctrine. At present the "liberals" know what they want. Most "conservatives" are confused.

WILLIS A. SNYDER  
HUDSON, NEW YORK

» "Thank you for sending me the copy of your November issue, which includes Isaac Rosenfeld's article, 'Confessions of a Writing Teacher.'

"As I expected it would be, the article is excellent. I am in wholehearted and unreserved agreement with Pro-

fessor Rosenfeld, whose indictment of writing courses, incidentally, might well serve as an ideal complement to an earlier AMERICAN MERCURY contribution, "Teaching Young America to Write" by L. Ruth Middleton of New York University's English department."

BROTHER CORMAC PHILIP, F.S.C.  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

**POISON APPRECIATED**

» "The November number of your magazine came several days ago, and I have been reading it with interest ever since. I certainly want to compliment you on the fine selection of articles, every one of which was of much interest.

"In particular, I was grateful for the article by James Rorty 'Poison In Every Pot.' This is the best piece that I have yet read on the subject, and I hope that you will have reprints made for distribution so that then people will know what is being put into their food and drinking water.

"If the article is put into pamphlet form I will appreciate your letting me know as I will want to order a supply for distribution."

ANDREW B. MCALLISTER  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

» "In the MERCURY for November I find two articles which I believe should be made available to every thinking American. I refer to the statements by Senator Styles Bridges and Mr. James Burnham.

"These two articles cover the broad field of our international relations with such clarity and insight as to offer — when presented together — an invaluable primer on this all-important subject; or so it seems to me. I earnestly

hope that you will bring these two theses out under one cover."

FRANCIS H. BUFFUM  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

» "My heartfelt thanks to you for publishing an article, 'Newspapers WITHOUT News,' by Anthony Harrigan who revealed a great truth too many newspaper subscribers seem unaware of. If subscribers would merely cancel subscriptions to papers which fail to give a fair amount of impartial news on the local scene. Subscribers have it in their power to force lousy papers to improve if readers would only use their freedom of choice."

J. WILSON HARRISON  
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

### ANTI-HARRIGAN

» I have just finished reading the article, "Newspapers Without News," by Anthony Harrigan, in your November issue. What I am writing to you is not a rebuttal, but I do feel that Mr. Harrigan must have had a terrible argument with the business office just before he sat down to his typewriter.

Mr. Harrigan says, in conclusion, and I presume this is supposed to be the punch in his piece:

"Our press will thrive, newspapers will sell, circulation will rise, when newspapers return to the old policy of reporting news with intelligence and courage. Not dress patterns but politics is the subject matter of the press. In sound reporting and strong editorials are the praise and the profits."

Mr. Harrigan's papers must have been having a different experience than most others, if he feels that newspapers are not selling and making money at present. Circulation gains have been regular and healthy for some years and in spite of newsprint shortage and increasing competition.

I do agree thoroughly in the argument that sound reporting and strong editorials are the essence of the newspaper. Or should be. And I believe that a great many papers, despite Mr. Harrigan's indignation, are providing just that. They also carry dress patterns and gossip. There is no reason why a decent balance between the pap and the profound cannot be attained and maintained.

For we must persuade people to buy our papers with pap, else we cannot pay for the profound. I do not believe Mr. Harrigan, after he gets over his mad with the business office, will contend that it would be easy to sell newspapers to the general public without a few comics, some dress patterns and a line or two about who's kicking up what in high places. And perhaps that is as it should be. People deserve to be entertained as well as instructed by the daily press. If they tend to ignore the profound, that is too bad. But perhaps if we keep after them long enough they will respond.

I believe the press is entitled to an answer in your columns.

J. S. C. BUTZ  
JACKSONVILLE 1, FLORIDA

### PRO-HARRIGAN

» "Newspapers Without News" by Anthony Harrigan is a most valuable

and timely criticism. If anything, it is too conservative — too mild. Much more could and should have been said. Why not publish the whole truth about so-called newspapers?

IRA D. CARDIFF

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON

» My attention has been called to a statement made on page 10 of the October issue of your magazine, which you attribute to the book *From Major Jordan's Diaries*, concerning equipment given to Soviet Russia for the printing of currency.

The statement which says that the Treasury Department gave "our engraved plates" to Soviet Russia and Russia printed with U. S. equipment billions of dollars in currency which the United States has been forced to redeem would seem to imply to the reader that plates for the printing of United States currency were given to Russia. This is totally incorrect. The plates for the printing of United States currency have never been given to Russia nor to any other foreign country.

What probably gives rise to statements similar to that published in your magazine, which apparently is not a quotation from Major Jordan's book, is the fact that photographic glass negatives and positives for making printing plates were made available to the Soviet government by the United States for the printing of Allied Military Marks used by the Allied powers in Europe. It should be noted that the Military Marks produced by the United States and by the Soviet Union were issued by occupation au-

thorities acting as the authorized Government of Germany. There was never any obligation on the part of the United States, or any other Allied government, to redeem this currency and no redemption has been made by the United States. Moreover, as the result of the introduction of a new form of currency in both the Eastern and Western Zones of Germany, the Military Marks are no longer legal tender within Germany and, therefore, have no present value.

During the invasion and the early days of the occupation of Germany authorized personnel of the United States Armed Forces were permitted to convert into dollars, for remittance to the United States, the Military Marks which they received as pay and allowance. The practice of converting these Marks for personnel was, however, discontinued in September, 1946.

E. H. FOLLY  
UNDER SECRETARY OF  
THE TREASURY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



# Draughts of Old Bourbon

JAMES MONROE MADISON

## For a SECOND WHISKY REBELLION

FOR the sake of both its present and its future, what this country needs is a rebellion. A real knock-down, drag-out, oath-hurling, skull-cracking rebellion. I'm not advocating such a rebellion, you understand: a man can get thrown into the oubliette now for suggesting violence toward the government of the United States. On advice of counsel I'm only *stating the need* for rebellion, not actually advocating it. But Americans are getting too tired, too old, too complacent; we need to revive our tradition of violence; we ought to demonstrate that we still can get mad.

The healthiest sort of rebellion always is one against taxes. Producers against the blood suckers. Free men against the dad-burned bureaucrats. Patriots against the revenueurs. The Boston Tea Party.

The Virginia revolt against the Stamp Act. There is something fine and inspiring about a man grabbing his shillelagh and rushing out and beating hell out of a tax collector. This nation was born of such spirit.

And the best tax rebellions are those against whisky taxes. Whenever a free man no longer gets mad over a new whisky tax, he's losing his spirit; and whenever a free people no longer rebel against a new whisky tax, they are about ready for the Doo-chay and history's dustheap.

Scotland was important as long as Scotchmen were belligerent and made and drank Scotch whisky. Men won't suffer slavery — when they can sniff smoke from hickory logs burning under a pot-still on a Spring morning. But Scotchmen lost their souls whenever they let Englishmen tax their whisky to the point where

Scotchmen had to begin drinking beer.

The best American soldiers in both the First and Second Wars were those from the moonshine areas. Before Sergeant York was twelve years old he could knock the buttons off a revenue agent with a squirrel gun at three hundred yards. Men who make and drink their own whisky just naturally hate taxes and tyrants and love liberty.

There is something healthy, too, in men drinking whisky they make themselves. I attribute my own love of liberty and contempt for bureaucrats to the fact that I was twenty-one before I ever drank a drop of whisky that wasn't made by a member of my own family. Down in my home county in Alabama fifty-three stills were captured during 1951, and it's reassuring to know that for every one that was captured at least ten are in full production. My folks are keeping the home fires burning, beating off the competition of Kentucky whisky, and starting out every morning by looking straight into the rising sun and yelling: "Goddam the Yankees and Harry Truman!"

A STORY WHICH every American patriot should read every ten years is the story of the first whisky rebellion. It was 1794, and the East Coast was getting civilized. The Federal government had been care-

fully brought into being by free men who were suspicious of it, and the first bureaucrats were flexing their muscles. But out in Western Pennsylvania life was still grim for the frontiersmen. Rye delivered to Philadelphia brought forty cents a bushel, and a horse could carry only four bushels. The army at Fort Pitt paid forty cents a gallon for rye whisky which required a bushel and a half of rye to make. But a horse could carry twenty-four gallons of rye whisky to Philadelphia where whisky brought ninety cents a gallon. So the smart farmer made Monongahela Rye and hauled it East, risking Indian raids along the trails. Whisky was drunk by most everybody; and it was the principal unit of barter.

In 1791 Alexander Hamilton, the strong central government man who probably would have loved the New Deal, introduced a bill for the first federal tax on whisky — a tax of nine cents a gallon. Madison and Jefferson went along with Hamilton reluctantly, and the bill was passed.

The tax hit the frontiersmen hard, in three ways. First, it allowed revenue collectors to search a man's house for whisky; and this is galling to free men. If whisky was found, the farmer had to travel three hundred miles to Philadelphia to stand trial; and then, too, the government wanted the tax paid in cash, and farmers had little cash.

The farmers reacted as free men

should react. They held angry protest meetings and decreed that any man who accepted a position as tax collector would be ostracized. Then they proceeded to tar and feather all the collectors they could find.

By 1793 practically no tax had been collected, and that year the farmers became even more belligerent against the government out of sympathy for the French Revolution. As feeling ran high over the Citizen Genet incident, the farmers burned the barns of all sympathizers with the Federal government, raised "Liberty Poles" in front of their homes, and beat up any tax collector they could find.

On July 15, 1794, the first federal soldiers arrived in Western Pennsylvania specifically charged with enforcing the tax collections. A force of five hundred armed farmers met the soldiers, surrounded them, disarmed them, gave them all the whisky they could drink, and dispersed them. On July 26 the farmers robbed the federal mail to make certain that no names were being sent back to Philadelphia.

The rebellion failed later that year, however, when more federal troops were sent, and when the state took stern measures to support the federal government. Thereafter, the farmers had to pay the tax on all commercial quantities of whisky, and they could avoid it only on quantities for family or small community consumption.

IN THE 157 YEARS since then, the federal tax on whisky has increased from nine cents to \$10.50 a gallon. The cost of manufacturing a gallon of whisky has increased very little: a gallon of good bourbon now costs between .65 and \$1.25 to make, depending on whether it is aged in a charred barrel. But a drinking gallon of I. W. Harper for Christmas, 1951, cost \$34.50 in New York.

The modern liquor store is, first of all, an institution for collecting taxes, and only secondarily does it provide service for its customers. More than half of its receipts goes to pay local, state, and federal levies; and less than half goes to pay rent, salaries, transportation, and manufacturing costs. Each year since the repeal of Prohibition, there has been an increase in at least one of the different levies.

Where will it stop? The increase in taxation will never stop until there is a rebellion by the taxpayers; and today Americans have become so docile under taxation that the bureaucrats hold the taxpayers in contempt. Some future Gibbon may conclude that the failure of the first whisky rebellion marked the beginning of the end of liberty in America.



## NATURE OF THE ENEMY:

# The Soviet Army

J. M. Mackintosh

THERE can be no doubt that of all the instruments of policy at the disposal of the Soviet government at the present time, the army is the most imposing and formidable. Its impressive size, and its halo of victories over the German army during World War II, encourage the Soviet government in its present uncompromising attitude and enable it to maintain its hold over the countries of Eastern Europe. The Soviet leaders believe in force, and as the speeches at the Nineteenth Party Congress have shown, they intend to give their armed forces exceptional priority in the coming years.

But the Soviet army is more than just an exceptionally large and powerful military force. It has a dual character which is the key to its own strength and weakness. Defense

of the Soviet Union is only one of its roles in the eyes of the government. Its victories are also intended to further the political aims of the ruling party. It has been the constant fear of the Soviet leaders that the army might come to question the identification of party and state. On the one great occasion when the party leaders persuaded themselves that the military chiefs had indeed begun to do so — in the years 1937–38 — they reacted with such violence that the purge resulted in the destruction of the entire army high command and some 15,000 officers. It is only when we remember that the Soviet leadership insists on army loyalty to the party first and to the homeland second that we can understand the Soviet army and the non-military factors which influence it.

Perhaps it is best to approach this subject from the viewpoint of the Soviet leaders. Having decided upon a peacetime standing army of three million men, their problem is how to ensure maximum military effi-

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ciency together with a first-class security system and unquestioning political reliability and loyalty to the party. Of these tasks the maintenance of military efficiency is the most straightforward, and there is no doubt that the authorities have succeeded in building up a formidable military machine.

The Russian soldier is first-class material, being physically tough, used to a hard life, and ignorant of many of the comforts to which Western nations are accustomed. Military discipline is Prussian in type. Saluting even of non-commissioned officers is strictly enforced, and a single case of omission may mean five days' close arrest. Absence without leave may be counted automatically as desertion, punishable by many years' forced labor. Military terminology for a soldier in the presence of an officer is rigidly laid down and adhered to: "Permission to report" must be asked before a soldier can speak to a superior, and instead of "Yes" and "No" the soldier must say: "Exactly so," and "In no way, no" — a return to the practice of the Imperial Russian Army. Under the military code laid down in 1940, a soldier has no redress against an officer and no channels for an appeal against an order or a sentence. On occupation duty in Germany and Austria, Soviet troops are confined to barracks permanently after duty hours, and contact with the local population is absolutely forbidden.

Army discipline in fact can be summed up in this way: an officer has unlimited power over those under his command and in extreme cases, even in peacetime, insubordination is punishable by execution on the spot.

AS A FIGHTING FORCE the contemporary Soviet army has the advantages of battle experience, self-confidence drawn from a long succession of victories, and experienced war leaders. The High Command is under the direction of the War Minister, Marshal Vassilievsky, who served during the war as Chief of the General Staff and Commander of the Front, or army group, which captured Koenigsberg in East Prussia. He has a number of deputies, and directs the army through four main organs: the General Staff under General Shtemenko; the Command of the Land Forces under Marshal Koniev; the Rear and Supply Services under General Khruliov; and the Political Administration under General Shikin. The principal chain of command passes through the Headquarters of the Land Forces (comprising the commanders of the active arms of service) to the military districts into which the Soviet Union is divided — twenty-three in all. Each military district is commanded by a marshal or senior general, and according to its geographical position contains a large or small component of the army's active and reserve



formations. These may be organized in armies (as in the frontier districts), corps or divisions (in the more central districts). But the strength of a military district is to be reckoned in the number and type of divisions it contains.

The bulk of the army's strength lies in the rifle (infantry) divisions and motorized rifle divisions (the latter containing a greater proportion of motor transport). These divisions, which number about 11,000 men each, usually contain three rifle regiments, a regiment of artillery, and an armored regiment of fifty tanks. Secondly, there are the tank divisions, of 10,500 men, containing three or four tank regiments and a motorized regiment. There are also larger mechanized divisions of 13,000 men, with three mechanized regiments and two tank regiments. The artillery, too, is organized in divisions: the field artillery division and the antiaircraft division, both about 6,000 men in strength. Finally, there are some cavalry divisions of about 5,000 men. In an active force these are grouped in corps and armies. A corps would consist of two to three rifle divisions and a tank or mechanized division, and two or three such corps would make up a rifle army. The armored formations are, however, also grouped in powerful mechanized armies with no corps organization, but with a strength of two tank and two mechanized divisions each. A rifle army

would probably also have one or two artillery divisions at its disposal.

The basis of Soviet war doctrine and practice is the use of the army's strength in mass formation. During the last war a superiority of eight to one over the enemy was regarded as the minimum for an offensive, and the Russians scored their greatest victories when a front commander was able to employ on one sector two tank armies of 1,500 tanks each. Over 20,000 guns were concentrated for the storming of Berlin in 1945. The rifle armies are used to effect breaches in the enemy lines, to attack fortified positions, and to hold them against counterattack, while the mechanized forces pour through the gaps to exploit the break-through.

Everything is sacrificed to the aim of mobility in the mass, including the reduction of the rear and supply services to the absolute minimum. Living off the country is the rule rather than the exception. The medical, engineering and signals services have to be content with the barest necessities and only in the branch of recovery and repair of damaged vehicles is there anything approaching what in the West would be regarded as a satisfactory complement of technicians and equipment. In action, considerable use is made of penal battalions for effecting suicide break-through operations. In fact, the whole structure and outlook of the Soviet army on the military side

is that of a rough but effective machine of great brute strength.

**B**UT MILITARY EFFICIENCY is not enough for the government: it must have unquestioning political loyalty as well. This presents a serious problem, loyalty to one's homeland being a natural emotion, while readiness to die for a political regime is not. This is especially true in the Soviet army, since the majority of recruits come from the collective farms where conditions of life lead to a constant struggle with the regime. The task of identifying the Russian soldier's natural love for his country with loyalty to the party, is the main duty of that unique feature of the Soviet army, the Political Administration. Attached to every headquarters, from the general staff to battalion or company level, are representatives of the Political Administration with the title of "Deputy Commander for Political Affairs," or in Soviet terminology "Zampolit." In most units the Zampolit organizes two daily political sessions, an early morning reading of the newspapers, and lectures and discussions on political affairs after military training in the evening. He encourages men to join the Party and the Komsomol, runs the unit club and edits its newspaper. In general the Zampolit is supposed to have a hand in everything from discipline to sport, but his main functions are educational and propagandist. He

works hand in glove with the officials of the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of the Interior.

The Soviet government frankly acts on the principle that every citizen is a potential enemy of the state, especially during army service when he has access to arms. Hence the troops of the Ministry of the Interior, and what are called the "Special Sections" within the army itself. The former are organized in regiments and divisions, trained and equipped to carry out the decisions of the party even against the army. They are in charge of deportations, they combat partisan activities, they maintain the security of state officials, and assist the frontier guards to patrol especially dangerous border areas. Allied with them is the "Special Section," i.e., the network of agents within the regular army. Representatives of the Special Section are attached to most formations and may summon any officer or man to prolonged interrogation; they recruit agents among the soldiers and generally create an impression that the eyes and ears of the secret police are everywhere.

The army thus organized, trained, indoctrinated and supervised, has at its disposal vast resources of manpower and industry. National Service men serve normally for three years, and on completion of their active service are placed in the reserves, where they do a short period of training each year. In a statement

made to the Nineteenth Party Congress on October 7, 1952, the War Minister, Marshal Vassilievsky, stated that 60 per cent of present reserve officers and 90 per cent of serving officers, from company commander upwards, have battle experience. In the sphere of military expenditure, the budget accounts for a declared total of 23 per cent for defense purposes, but since much of Soviet military expenditure is concealed in the budgets for the Ministries of the Interior, of Construction and of State Security, the true total is probably well over 26 per cent.

How is this tremendous military machine deployed? The latest official information given by the British and American authorities is dated 1951, but there is no reason to suppose that any significant change has occurred in the last eighteen months. At that time the Soviet army consisted of 175 rifle, mechanized, tank, and cavalry divisions, with 40 artillery and antiaircraft divisions in support. Of this total, 110 were rifle and cavalry, and 65 armored. In Germany there are 32 divisions, comprising 4 rifle, 10 mechanized and 8 tank divisions, together with 2 artillery and 8 anti-aircraft divisions, grouped in 2 rifle armies and 4 mechanized armies. In immediate support are 2 tank and 2 mechanized divisions in Poland. There are 2 divisions (one rifle and

one mechanized) in Austria, and 2 mechanized divisions each in Hungary and Rumania. There are no Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, or Albania. In the whole of Eastern Europe there are, therefore, 42 divisions, 27 of them armored.

The strength of the Soviet armies in the Far East is believed to be not less than 40 divisions with 6 army headquarters. This leaves just over 100 divisions for the rest of the U.S.S.R., 50 to 60 of which are probably west of a line drawn from Leningrad to Rostov-on-Don, and the remainder concentrated in the Caucasus and the Central Asiatic Republics. These concentrations are commanded by the outstanding field commanders who emerged with high reputations from the recent war — men like General Chuikov in Germany, Marshal Malinovsky in the Far East, Generals Antonov and Fediuninsky in the Caucasus, Generals Pukhov and Grechko in the Ukraine, General Galitsky in the Carpathians, Generals Bagramian and Gorbатов in the Baltic, and General Luchinsky and Marshal Meretskov in Leningrad and the Far North. All commanded fronts or armies during the war, and are also considered to be thoroughly reliable politically.

In trying to list the credit and debit factors of the Soviet army as a fighting force, there comes first on the credit side the high quality of the individual fighting man, his physical

toughness, his contempt for hardships, and his readiness to accept a high rate of casualties. Second in importance are the vast human and industrial resources at the disposal of the high command. Thirdly, there is the very considerable measure of success achieved by the Political Administration and the secret police in keeping the soldier ignorant of Western conditions — with one important exception to be mentioned below. Also on the credit side must go the skill and experience of Soviet commanders at all levels, and particularly the excellence of Soviet artillery science.

As against these positive factors there is the atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion which stifles initiative and makes commanders unwilling to accept responsibility in crises, outside a strictly limited range. Another serious weakness is the lack of educated men on the level of senior noncommissioned officers, skilled drivers and mechanical engineers capable of intricate maintenance, and this defect is becoming increasingly noticeable as the Soviet army becomes more motorized and mechanized. Although the units for the recovery of vehicles are more numerous than the medical units, the tendency is to drive a vehicle or a tank until it breaks down, with no attempt on the part of the individual driver to maintain it. While the rear services and communications have been simplified, increasing mecha-

nization places strains on them which they are unlikely to withstand without more elaborate equipment.

**M**OST IMPORTANT of all is the question of morale. It is true that the Political Administration works hard, and on the whole successfully, to keep the army's morale high. But the Soviet soldier who served abroad, during or after the war, was undoubtedly impressed by the fact that defeated Germany enjoys a higher standard of living than victorious Russia, and when he goes home on leave the contrast becomes even more glaring. While the soldier expects severe discipline, he frequently receives sentences for minor misdemeanors whose savageness offends his sense of justice. He resents, too, the width of the gulf between soldiers and officers, whose conditions and pay are so much better than his. He cannot understand the need for the harsh restrictions forbidding all contact with the German population, and the severe penalties inflicted on any offender tend to make him feel that he is not part of a victorious army, but a piece of cannon fodder.

These grievances remain as yet beneath the surface, but they would undoubtedly play an important part in any future war in which the Soviet Union suffered a severe defeat. The Soviet army is an impressive military machine, but if it has an Achilles heel, this is most likely where it is to be found.

## *This Mortal Coil*



EVERY SUNDAY morning, at a time when the rest of the city was at church, a few of us met down the quays. We ranged from a clerical student with scruples to a roaring atheist. The atheist, Dan Turner, was the one I liked best. He was a well-built, fresh-coloured man who looked like a sailor or farmer, but was really a County Council official. Part of my sympathy for him was due to the way he was penalised for his opinions. Long before, at the age of eighteen, he had had to give evidence in a taxation case and refused to take the oath. That finished him. Though he was easily the cleverest man in the Courthouse, he would never be secretary or anything ap-

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*Frank O'Connor, one of Ireland's finest short story writers, spent a little time in jail during the Irish Revolution. He is a linguist, librarian, and a former director of the Abbey Theatre. He never could see eye to eye with the school people, so he educated himself.*

proaching it. And knowing that, and knowing the constant intriguing to keep him from promotion only made him more positive and truculent. Not that he thought of himself as either; in his own opinion he was a perfect example of the English genius for compromise, but the nearest thing he ever got to passing some remark he disagreed with was to raise his eyebrows into his hair, turn his blue eyes the other way and whistle.

"You take things to the fair, Dan," I said to him once.

"All I ask," he replied reasonably enough, "is that bloody idiots will keep their opinions to themselves and not be working them off on me."

"If you want bloody idiots to do anything of the kind," I said, "you should go somewhere you won't be made a target of for putting them in their place."

"And if we all do that, this country will never be anything but a home for idiots," he said.

"Oh, of course, if you want to make a martyr of yourself in the interests of the country, that's a different thing, but it seems to me very queer conduct for a man that calls himself a rationalist. I call that sentimentality."

He nearly struck me over calling it sentimentality, but, of course, that's what it was. For all the man's study, he was as emotional as a child. He was cut to the heart by all the intrigues against him. He lived in an old house on the quays with a pious maiden sister called Madge who adored him, cluck-clucked and tut-tutted his most extravagant statements, and went to Mass every morning to pray for his conversion. Though it hurt him that she called in outside aid (even if it was purely imaginary), he was too big a man to hold it against her, and, according to his lights, he did his best to bring her to some sense of proportion.

"That's not religion at all," he would shout, slapping the arm of his chair in vexation. "That's damn superstition." But Madge only pitied and loved him the more for it, and went on in her own way believing in God, ghosts, fairies and nutmegs for lumbago.

It wasn't until well on in his thirties that Dan fell in love, and then he did it in a way that no rationalist could approve of. Tessa Bridie wasn't very young either, but, as with many another fine girl in the provinces, she found the fellows that

wanted to marry her were not always those she wanted to marry. As a last resort she was holding on to a clerk in an insurance office called McGuinness, with jet-black curly hair, nationalist sentiments and great aspirations after the religious life, which, I suppose, is the only sort of life a clerk in an insurance office can aspire to.

In spite of the way he had been spoiled by Madge, Tessa was convinced for a long time that Dan was the answer to her prayers. But Dan, in his simple, straightforward way, wouldn't let her be. He explained that he couldn't be the answer to anyone's prayer, because there was no one to answer prayers, and it was foolishness, foolishness and madness, to imagine that they were answered. Now, Tessa wasn't by any means a bigoted girl; she had several brothers and she knew that in the matter of religion and politics every man without exception had some deficiency, but this cut at the very roots of her existence. Because if Dan wasn't the answer to her prayers, what was he? She quietly started a novena for enlightenment, hoping to bring in a verdict in his favour, but so acute was her awareness of Dan's view that there was no enlightenment either, only whatever you wanted yourself to believe, that it ended by convincing her that it was her duty to give him up. He begged and prayed, he cursed and blinded; he assured her he was the most tolerant

man in the world and she could believe in any damn nonsense she liked if only she'd marry him, but he had no chance against a direct revelation from heaven. She got engaged to McGuinness.

I thought it a pity, because she was a really nice girl, and McGuinness was only a poor dishcloth of a man.

Then I heard through my sister that Dan was behaving very queerly. It seemed he had deserted all his old haunts. He no longer came down the quays on Sundays, refused to eat or talk, and didn't stir out at night until after dark, when he went for long, lonesome walks in the country. People who had met him talked about the way he passed them without looking, or the brief nod he gave them. I felt it was up to me to do something. So one fine spring evening I called. Madge opened the door, and I could see that she had been crying.

"I didn't see Dan this long time, Madge," said I. "How is he?"

"Come in, Michael John," she said, taking out her handkerchief. "He's upstairs. He didn't stir out this last couple of days. Sure, you know the County Council will never stand it."

I followed her up the stairs. Dan was lying on the bed, dressed but without collar and tie, his two hands under his head, apparently studying the ceiling. When I came in he raised his brows with his usual look of

blank astonishment as much as to say, "What the hell do you want?"

"Would you like a cup of tea, Dan?" Madge asked.

"If 'tis for me you needn't mind," said Dan with a patient, long-suffering air that made it only too plain what he thought of the suggestion that he could be snatched back from the gates of the grave by a cup of tea.

"Wisha, I'm sure Michael John would like one," said Madge.

"You're not feeling well, I hear?" I said.

"I don't know how you heard anything of the kind," said Dan, rolling his blue eyes to the other side of the room, "because I'm sure I didn't say anything about it."

"Wisha, Michael John," Madge burst out, "did you ever in all your life hear of a grown man carrying on like that on account of a woman?"

"Now," Dan said, raising his voice and turning the flat of his hand in her direction like a partition wall, "I told you I wasn't going to discuss my business with you."

"Why then, indeed, she discussed it enough," said Madge, not realising how every word hurt. "There wasn't much about you that she didn't repeat. How well I could hear it all from a woman in the market."

"Well, go back and discuss it with the woman in the market," he retorted. She gave me a tearful smile and went out.

"You have a grand view," I said, looking down on the quays and the

three-master below the bridge in the dusk.

"Yes," he said grudgingly, "but there isn't the traffic there used to be."

"You never wanted to be a sailor?" I asked.

"I was never asked," he replied as if this was a grievance that hadn't occurred to him up to that moment. "No one ever consulted me about what I wanted to be."

"What you need is a holiday," I said.

"How can I take a holiday?" he asked, turning his eyes wonderingly on me as if he had discovered that I, too, had come with a view to persecuting him further.

"If you go on like this you'll take a holiday whether you like it or not," I said, "and it won't be by the seaside. We'll go to Ballybunion for a week."

The eyebrows went up again.

"Parish priests!"

"All right," I said to humour him. "We'll go where there are no parish priests, even if we have to cross the channel for it."

"I'd like to see London again," he admitted. "I wasn't there for ten years."

The idea of that almost got him into good humour, and when I was leaving he put on a collar and tie and walked home with me. I could see that Madge was well-pleased with the result of my intervention, and I wasn't altogether dissatisfied myself.

But the pleasure didn't last long. Next morning I was in the yard when Madge called. She could scarcely speak for terror.

"Michael John, something awful is after happening," she said.

"What?" I asked.

"'Tis Dan. I don't know what to do with him. He tried to commit suicide."

"He what?"

"He did, Michael John. After he came home last night. He turned on the gas-tap before he went to bed. I know because I could still smell it this morning. He's in bed now with a terrible headache." Then she began to cry. "Sure, anyone could have told him you couldn't commit suicide with the gas we have in our house."

"I'll be down this evening," I said. "We'll have to get him away by Saturday without fail."

I spoke with a good deal more confidence than I felt. Suicide is a thing our class have no experience of because a man's family or friends would never let him go so far. It was only with a freak of nature like Dan that the thing became possible at all, and, knowing the man's obstinacy, I wasn't sure but that he might try the same thing again. I didn't know what was the best thing to do. I bought a bottle of whiskey and a few lively gramophone records to bring him, because whenever I feel like committing suicide myself, I usually go out and buy myself whatever takes my fancy. After such



a tribute of respect to myself, I never feel so inclined to deprive the community of my services.

He was sitting in the front room when I went in, still without his collar and tie, and he barely lifted his head to salute me. With the dusk coming down on the river outside, the man seemed so lonesome, so shut away in his own doubt and gloom, that my heart bled for him.

"Well," I said, trying to make my voice sound as cheerful and out-of-doors as possible, "I got leave from Saturday if you're ready to start."

"I don't know that I'll be able," he replied in a dead voice, as though the words were merely a momentary interruption of the train of thought that went on in his own head.

"You'll have to," I said. "You can't go on like this much longer."

"I wasn't thinking of going on much longer," he answered.

"Why?" I said, raising my voice and trying to make a joke of it. "You weren't thinking of chucking yourself in the river or anything?"

"I suppose a man might as well do that as something else."

"Ah, look here, Dan," I said, opening the bottle of whiskey, "we all feel like that at times, and it's only a mug's game. In a week's time you'll only be laughing at it."

"Of course, if you're not there in a week's time, you won't have an opportunity of laughing at it," he said, positive even in despair.

"That's why it's a mug's game,"

I said, filling him out a stiff one. "Doing something permanent about something temporary is always a mug's game, like burning the house to get rid of a leak in the roof."

"Temporary?" he said, raising his brows at me and becoming more like himself. "Is old age a temporary state?"

"Old age?" I said. "Merciful God, how old are you? Thirty-five?"

"Thirty-eight," he said in the tone of some old paralytic telling you he's eighty-three. "And what has a man of thirty-eight to look forward to in this country, Mr. Dunphy?"

"Being thirty-nine," said I.

"It's hardly likely to be much pleasanter than being thirty-eight. And that, let me tell you is no sinecure."

I took my whiskey and sat opposite him, while he still continued to look at me moodily, a big powerful red-faced man, his hands over the arms of his chair, his head lowered, his eyebrows raised, his blue, smouldering eyes in ambush beneath them.

"The trouble with you, Dan," I said, "is that you're under two delusions. One is that everyone except yourself is having a lovely time; the other is that when you're dead your troubles are at an end."

That roused him.

"That's not an illusion," he said, "That's a scientific fact."

"Fact, my nanny!" I said. "How could it be a fact?"

"'Tis a fact that anyone can see with his own two eyes."

"Well, I can't see it for one," I said.

"You can see it, but you don't want to see it," he said, tossing his big head at me. "It doesn't suit you to see it. You're like all the other gentlemen who pretend they can't see it. My God," he said, beginning to explode on me, "the vanity and conceit of people, imagining that their own miserable little personality is too valuable to be wiped out! But it is wiped out, just the same."

Then I began to get angry too. Forgetting the fellow was a sick man, I wanted to take it out of him for his unmannerly arrogance and complacency.

"And who the hell are you?" I said. "Who told you you were alive in the first place?"

"Who told me?" he asked, a bit shaken. "No one told me. I am alive. If I didn't know that I wouldn't know anything."

"And who the blazes said you do know anything?" I shouted. "As long as you can't tell me who you really are, or what you're doing in this room at this moment, you have no right to tell me in that impudent tone that when you die there's no more about you."

He thought about that for a moment. I fancy it had never occurred to him in his life before that a man with his strong character mightn't be as real as he thought himself, and

that he didn't quite know how to answer it.

"I admit there are some things you can't explain yet," he said grudgingly.

"Nor never will be able to explain," said I.

"Everything can be explained," he said, getting indignant again.

"Not things that are deliberately intended not to be explained. There are things we don't know, because if we knew them, whatever the answer was, we couldn't go on living."

"Plenty of people think they know them."

"They have faith," said I. "But faith, without doubt, can't exist."

"They have more than faith, Mr. Dunphy," he said saucily. "They have actual knowledge, according to themselves."

"They pretend to have, but they know as little about it as I do. But you and they go on as if you had special information. Doubt is the first principle of existence, and you and they go round trying to destroy it. But your own lives prove the opposite. If you really knew what you pretend to know, you wouldn't be planning to go to England on Saturday."

"I'm not so sure that I'm going to England on Saturday," he said with sudden despondency, all his load of troubles coming back to his mind.

But the argument did him good. It did me good as well. It was the first time I had stood up to him in

an argument and if I didn't exactly floor him, I did at least hold my own. I continued the treatment with the records; Madge came in to listen, and it was quite like old times. He came to the door to see me off. It was a lovely starlit night, and he leaned against the jamb of the door, talking and listening to the voices of girls and sailors from away down the river.

But next morning I was only in to work when a couple of the men came up to tell me about the body that had been fished out of the river a quarter of an hour before. I didn't need anyone to tell me whose it was. I knew my confounded complacency had put me astray again.

"Below the bridge was this, Jack?" I asked.

"Yes, Mr. Dunphy. Why?"

"I'm the man that's responsible, Jack," I said. "Tell the boss I probably won't be back this morning."

I rushed off down the quays. They were very quiet, and the church and the trees reflected in the water, it was so still. I was blaming myself terribly for the whole thing, for not realising that a man as headstrong as that would never be diverted from anything he made up his mind to by arguments. When I reached the bridge I saw plainly that it was all as Jack Delea had described it; the knot of women outside the door, and the still undried trail from the quayside to the hall door.

Madge opened the door, and at

once she put her finger to her lips. Surprised not to see her looking more concerned, I tiptoed in the hall and up the stairs after her. They were wet too, and there was a shocking smell of gas. She opened the door of Dan's bedroom, but he wasn't there. The window was wide open; the bed had not been slept in; there was a teacheast in the middle of the floor.

"What did they do with him, Madge?" I whispered, wondering if he had been removed to the morgue.

"Dan?" — she said in surprise. "Oh, he's downstairs, at his breakfast."

"You mean he's all right?"

"It was the mercy of God that the sailor saw him," she said, her eyes shining. "I didn't want you to say anything till you knew what happened."

"But what did happen?" I asked, with an enormous feeling of relief that there wouldn't be any inquest.

"Don't you see?" she said, pointing to the teacheast. "He had a length of tubing running through this and a tap at the end."

She lifted the teacheast which had a hole drilled in the side of it for the tubing to go through. Beneath it was a pillow and a rug.

"What in hell is that for?" I asked.

"He bought the tubing and the tap so that he could turn on the gas when he was inside the teacheast," said Madge with a smile at the man's innocence. "The notion of him being

kept down by a teachest, that two men couldn't control when he had the pneumonia. He must have been lifting it off him the whole time. You can see where he got sick through the window."

"And after all that to throw himself into the river!" I said, marveling at the pertinacity of the man.

"Ah, that was afterwards, Michael John," said Madge. "Then he saw a great light."

"A great what?"

"A great light. He saw life was good."

"He saw a lot," said I.

"He said he saw everything quite plain at last. So to put temptation away from him he took the tube and the tap to throw them in the river. It was while he was doing that that he tripped over the rope."

"I see," said I. "He saw the light, but he didn't see the rope. I hope you don't take that nonsense seriously."

"Oh, I do, Michael John," she said, beginning to cry. "I'm sure 'tis the answer to my prayers. Whatever you do, you mustn't upset him now. He's the best brother in the world only for all those misfortunate books he reads. 'Tis them I'd like to throw in the river."

And she gave a heart-scalded look at the shelf of books by Dan's bed.

I went downstairs in a sort of stupor, and there in the kitchen in his best suit with a collar and tie on

was Dan, eating his breakfast and reading the paper at the same time.

"Hullo," he said, quite friendly.

"Oughtn't you to be damn well ashamed of yourself?" I said, losing all control of myself.

"Ashamed of myself?" he asked, raising his brows and getting on his usual high horse. "What would I be ashamed of? I suppose an accident can happen to anyone?"

"Accident?" I said. "Wasn't I sitting in the front room with you last night, trying to keep you away from any more accidents? What sort of way is this to treat your unfortunate sister that has her heart broken trying to look after you in your kimeens?"

Suddenly a strange look came into his face. He bowed his head and nodded.

"I admit that," he said meekly. "I admit I was headstrong."

"Headstrong," I said, refusing to be curbed, "and conceited, and thinking you were the only one in the world that was honest."

"I know, I know," he said, and it was only then it struck me that for the first time in his life he had agreed with me. It was an accident all right.

Of course, Madge wouldn't agree with that. He's a reformed character now. And the funny thing is, he'll run through a keyhole to avoid me. He says I'm a man without any proper faith.

# Do You Know—

*— that the average annual outlay of the U. S. Government for foreign aid during the past 12 years has been almost 7 billion dollars. This exceeds the annual cost of running the entire Federal Government during the early New Deal years when President Roosevelt was “spending the nation into bankruptcy.”*

J. C. VANDYKE  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

*— that the Truman Administration, with scarcely a voice of protest from Capitol Hill, has adamantly refused to render a public accounting of the expenditures and distribution of the \$18 billion appropriated under the Mutual Security Program for military and economic aid to our allies. The excuse, of course, is security. Yet throughout the Lend-Lease Program, when we were engaged in full-scale war, detailed quarterly reports were made public.*

R. F. WELLS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*— that the U. S. Department of State conceived and organized the most powerful cartel ever to exist in peacetime. It is the International Commodities Conference which allocates scarce raw materials among the nations, stabilizes (fixes) prices, and even controls the end use of such materials.*

J. A. HUDSON  
PITTSBURGH, PA.

*— that during World War II more than 21 million men were killed in battle, from 15 to 20 million civilians were killed in air raids, 29.5 million persons were wounded, mutilated or incapacitated. Also, more than 30 million homes were reduced to ashes and 45 million persons were evacuated, deported or interned.*

JAMES HINES  
HORSE BRANCH, KENTUCKY

In this space each month the MERCURY will publish what we judge to be the most important *facts* submitted by our readers. These must be facts, not opinions. Elsewhere we publish readers' opinions as well as our own. We invite the submission of such facts and will pay \$5 for each one published. Each submission should carry the notice "Facts" and should be accompanied by an authoritative reference. Unfortunately, we are not able to acknowledge or return submitted material.

# BOOKS

William Phillips

## *CHANGING FATHERS IN MIDSTREAM*

*The Problems of the Ex-Communists*

AS THE COLD WAR has become hotter, a flood of books and articles has been released on the subject of Communism. In the past there were a small number of studies by people whose experience had given them some "expertness" in the subject, but they were generally ignored, since Communism had not been publicly recognized as a menace; and those people who understood the nature of the Russian regime, when it was fashionable to hail it as a progressive ally, were often dismissed as political neurotics, obsessed with anti-Stalinism. On the whole, the tendency has been to write them off as premature anti-Communists. In the last few years, however, the market for writing about Communism has boomed, and the "experts" have multiplied like rabbits, with the result that two new types have emerged in the field: the professional historian, who has applied his academic training to the study

of Communism, and the free-lance amateur, who has been peddling second-hand truths and undigested truisms to popular audiences.

Of course, anything that throws light on the Communist movement is useful. For a time, so little analysis of it reached the public, that we could tolerate even a little nonsense on the subject, so long as it was accompanied by a few insights and served to promote a greater interest in the question. Now, it seems to me, the prime need is for discrimination, for with the pouring out of endless facts and theories, there is the danger of burying the nature of Communism under a mass of hunches, speculations, and myths. Where formerly too little attention was paid to the small body of informed writing, at present too much attention is paid to every wild and sensational notion of Communism.

Besides, insofar as the treatment

of Communists in our society has become a practical issue, it is especially important that we understand its true character and influence and do not confuse it with every other bugaboo. In practice, there are two equally dangerous forms of confusion: the failure to recognize a Communist unless he has a party card in his hand; and the irresponsible designation of any nonconformist as a Communist. Both of these constitute a threat to our democratic institutions, and make it more difficult to cope with Communism, either in its propagandistic or conspiratorial forms. And these failures come usually from two opposing sources, from those liberals who are unable to take Communists at their face value because they cannot disengage themselves from the progressive myths that have served to camouflage the nature of Communism, and from reactionaries who cannot distinguish between genuine liberalism and Communism.

THE LATEST BOOK ON Communism, *Report on the American Communist*,\* is by Morris Ernst, a distinguished liberal lawyer, and David Loth, a literary journalist. Its aim, according to the authors, is to present a composite portrait of the average or rank-and-file American Communist, through a kind of cap-

sule poll of former members. Armed with this snapshot of the standard Communist types, we should be able, the authors claim, to disinfect their minds so that they would not join or would leave if already in.

As the authors put it: "The thesis of this book is that the people of the United States cannot wisely and successfully combat Communism in this country unless they understand Communists. Understanding also will remove fear. So we propose to examine, with the assistance of personal accounts of several hundred men and women who have been in and out of the Communist Party, just why they joined and why they left. If we know these facts we will be in a better position to prevent the rank and file, which is the backbone of any party, from joining in the first place. Certainly we would be able to get them out before they have become dangerous agents of a foreign power."

This is, of course, a noble aim, and fine if it works. But it is a little too easy — like painless dentistry — as an approach to the complexities of the Communist problem. Besides, as can be seen even in their statement of aims, the authors throughout the book bring a number of prior conceptions of the Communist movement to a seemingly objective and impartial study of the facts.

If one were to assess the book in terms of its large claims, it would have to be said that it is a failure.

\* *Report on the American Communist*, by Morris L. Ernst and David Loth. Holt. 240 pp. \$3.00.

It does not add anything students of the subject do not already know; its method of research is slipshod; its facts are too simple and meager for any large generalizations; its assumptions are too often naïve; and it is full of half-baked psycho-analytical explanations of Communist motives. To one totally unfamiliar with the personality of a Communist, however, I suppose the book would be useful in conveying some sense of the pattern of faith and disillusionment of the ex-Communist. And if it is superficial or misleading on many questions, still it makes so many different and unconnected statements about Communism that some of them are bound to be true, and even illuminating, occasionally. On the whole, the book is disorganized, repetitious, and superficial, as it prances around on the surface of its subject.

The method used by Ernst and Loth was to get the confessions of three hundred ex-Communists on why they joined and why they left the party, along with some incidental information about their religion, nationality, education, profession, feelings about their father and mother, their sex life, and their psyche. They also tried to get the age group of the average joiner, his social origins (father's occupation, rural or urban background, etc.), and the effect of the political situation at the moment on influx and exodus from the party. Obviously,

the method resembles that of the pollsters, and, dimly, that of the sociologists, but since it is much less thorough it shares their faults more than their virtues.

Despite the weaknesses of the book, some valuable observations about Communism in America do break through, though they will not get any citations for originality. For example, they point out that most of the recruits to Communism are fairly literate but simple-minded, that they think of themselves as a political elite, and that while they are motivated by a complex of social and personal factors, in the main they think of themselves as the instruments of good will, progress, and justice. The book also suggests the combination of terror and belief that characterizes the Communist Party. The average member acquires the dedication of a fanatic. At the same time, however, he blindly takes orders from the most highly disciplined organization history has produced. The authors are illuminating, too, when they describe the system of social and economic blackmail that is used by the party to keep its members from leaving, or, once out, from revealing what they know about it. Perhaps the best thing that can be said about the book is that as they quote from the miniature autobiographies they solicited, some of the *feel* of the Communist Party atmosphere is communicated.



I GUESS it is useful, too, to reiterate for the thousandth time, especially today when so many fantastic charges are made with impunity, that the Communist movement is neither Jewish nor Negro. Though anyone who still believes this canard after the recent purge trials in Czechoslovakia, which played the theme of anti-Semitism for all it is worth, can be only a crackpot or worse.

The failure of the book is essentially a failure of conception, which leads to an oversimplified, incomplete, and somewhat distorted image of Communism. For one thing, their very method is shallow and misleading. Actually the book is a study of the ex-Communist rather than the Communist, of the person who wandered in and out of the party — which is a different problem. Hence it is questionable whether the book throws much light on the type who has stuck, who is, after all, the person with whom we have to cope today. Besides, though the authors insist that their sampling of three hundred is completely typical, there is no evidence to show that the several hundred thousand whom the authors did not question fall completely within the same pattern.

Nor am I convinced that the entire method of questioning ex-Communists is fruitful, because, at best, it leads to the discovery of what we already know, namely, that Communism harnesses idealist

hopes to vicious ends, and that the political life cycle of the ex-Communist involves belief, disillusionment, painful break, and readjustment. Questioning people who are by definition simple cannot yield any profound historical generalizations. Imagine polling several hundred or thousand people in France in 1792 to find out the causes and meaning of the French revolution — or asking the workers and peasants in 1917 to explain the Bolshevik revolution. They would have told Mr. Ernst and Mr. Loth what Lenin told them: that they were fighting for land, bread, and peace. If the authors of this book wish to argue, however, that ex-Communists are ex-officio experts on Communism, the problem still remains of discriminating between them, since they are certainly not homogeneous either in intelligence or in political conviction. Even Mr. Ernst and Mr. Loth, I notice, sneer at some ex-Communists — usually those who have made the most dramatic public exposures.

ASIDE FROM their method, the authors also have certain preconceptions about Communism which I think are false. And most of them stem from a failure to recognize the totalitarian and conspiratorial nature of Communism, and, hence, the gulf that separates it from the rest of society, regardless of the differences or conflicts in the non-

Communist world. Thus the authors say:

"Communists are a part of the whole American mass of dissenters, nonconformists. The strength of our nation lies in part in its resistance to conformity. There is a special category within this large and extremely valuable group. In probing into the reasons for a Communist, it must never be forgotten that some of the world's greatest men and women are violently dissenting rebels, and that some of the triumphs of progress have been achieved through a stubborn nonconformity. Clemenceau is supposed to have said: Any man who is not a Socialist at 25 has no heart and any man who is a Socialist at 60 has no brain."

And in discussing the feasibility of outlawing the Communist Party they say:

"All human history proves the impracticability of outlawing an idea. . . . This futile warfare [unenlightened exposure and prosecution] has led us to the ultimate absurdity of attempting to legislate an idea out of existence, to defeat a philosophy with a force. . . ."

Now there is a half truth here, for Communism is a political force operating through an ideology. But this is not the same as calling it an idea, by which I assume the authors mean a serious and independent belief, advanced by individuals in any artistic or intellectual field. In this sense, Communism is not an idea.

It is an organization based on terror and seeking power, that manipulates ideas for the purpose of maintaining and recruiting members, and, even more important, for influencing general public opinion. Therefore Communism has nothing to do with legitimate and organic nonconformity, like that of Thoreau or Veblen, for instance, and if Communists or fellow-travelers try to make this identification it is only to confuse the issue and to disguise their true character by making it appear that they are innocent of anything but dissent. And when Clemenceau's remark, made incidentally in a different historical situation, is quoted, it tends to blur the character of Communism, for by a socialist Clemenceau did not mean an agent of a totalitarian foreign power, which is exactly what a Communist is today. Socialism is a legitimate opinion, whether one agrees with it or not.

ON THE WHOLE, Ernst and Loth play down the conspiratorial and international character of the Communist movement, treating it more as a local aberration. They do say at some points that the American Communist gets his orders ultimately from Moscow, but they generally discuss the party in America as though it is a separate phenomenon. In presenting the motives, for example, for joining the party, they slur over its world-wide or-

ganization and appeal, based on the myth of the revolution in the Soviet fatherland, and the demagogic use of the ideals of progress, justice, and peace throughout the world by a tightly knit military apparatus. If there were no Communist parties abroad, reaching out from Russia itself, the American Communist Party simply could not exist at all. What gives some credibility to the separate consideration of the party in America is that it is rather small and ineffective as compared with the parties in Europe, reflecting to some extent the situation in America. And no one with any claim to political sanity can maintain that the Communist Party is a direct political threat in this country. It is a menace only in the sense that it has been able to influence important sectors of opinion and has been a base for espionage. However, even if it is not a national threat, I, for one, see no reason to countenance these activities.

Since Ernst and Loth constantly lose sight of the total character of Communism, they tend to reduce what is essentially a mass of historical phenomenon to an individual one. Hence they dig into the psyches of their three hundred ex-Communists to find the clues to their behavior. The result is a weird mixture of psychoanalytic and political jargon. They triumphantly exhibit the apparent fact that most of their informants came from

disturbed homes, had difficulties with their fathers or mothers, or both, were competitive with their brothers and sisters, were lonely, moody, frustrated. Some of them were physically handicapped, or felt mentally or physically inferior—one girl was, or thought she was, ugly. The authors also poke into the sex life of the ex-Communists and their families, apparently because it has been demonstrated by psychoanalysts, not to speak of Kinsey, that sex is always with us. And even if it is not clear just how sex explains Communism, since it seems to exist even in the lines of non-Communists, still it may be a good idea to show that one has a firm grasp of something so fundamental as sex. Besides, Ernst and Loth cover themselves by stating that even where there is no sex it is politically significant.

"For sex," they say, "is one of the mainsprings of a Communist's motivations just as it is for everyone else. This is true no matter what the actual sex life of an individual may be. Even if there is no sex life in the usual sense at all, it is true, perhaps under these rare circumstances especially true."

The larger psychological pattern built up by Ernst and Loth is easier to define. It is simply a political version of the Oedipus complex. For it seems that the typical Communist has rebelled against the dominant father and has substituted the authority of the party and the

paternal image of Stalin. If, however, "Papa was the Caspar Milquet-toast of the family," the result was the same, since "Mama was a rather overwhelming character." It is not very clear why the Communist leaves the party, unless it is because he eventually makes up with his real father—or mother—and finds it unnecessary to play the game with his substitute father. Nor do Ernst and Loth trouble to explain why other human beings who have dominant or recessive parents were never sucked into the Communist movement. And even if this were all true, I fail to see what could be done about it except to prescribe psychiatric treatment for everybody, and this would be rather difficult to accomplish, especially for millions of people in places like India or China.

ASIDE from the more theoretical aspects of the Communist problem, there seems to be one immediate practical consideration touched on by Ernst and Loth that is growing in importance because of the political climate in America today. We know that Communism usually has been able to exploit the polarization of opinion into the conventional categories of right and left. And this is precisely what has been happening in the last few years. Many liberals have been arguing that the exposure of Communists at this time would play into the hands of the growing

reaction in this country. As a result, there has been a tendency to accept the existence of Communists in public life as a lesser evil to what is considered to be the threat of repression from the right. On the other hand, some conservative and reactionary opinion in this country has been doing all it can to prove these liberals are correct by indiscriminately amalgamating independent, liberal thought and aesthetic experiment with Communism. In either case, the Communists profit by the confusion. Not only are the Communists able to gain immunity by disguising themselves as liberals, but liberals hesitate to open fire on them, and fellow-travelers and Communists become reluctant to break with the Party—for fear of helping the forces of reaction. One of the most absurd results of this situation is the suspicion with which the ex-Communist is regarded.

With the growing polarization and excesses on both sides, it seems to me most essential to be critical of each. A firm and effective anti-Communism, that is not taken in by any of the endless rationalizations for protecting the Communists, must at the same time take a stand against the uninformed and irresponsible demagogues who use Communism as an excuse to make political noise, and who in the name of anti-Communism peddle their own brand of reactionary nonsense.

# BOOKS IN SHORT

## Glee and Horror

*Paul Klee. Carola Giedion-Welcker. Viking. 156 pp. 13 color plates. \$7.50.*

IT IS TRUE, as the book says, that art survives the times. But the times survive the times, too; more clearly than anywhere else the times survive themselves in art. As both the congressman who tries to suppress it, and the art functionary who tries to push it, are deeply aware, modern art is the image of our time. This is not the best reason for looking at art, but it can serve as a starter.

The work of Paul Klee is very much worth while looking at for itself; but it is especially of value to the man who goes to modern art for some glimpse of order in the contemporary chaos. Klee lived from 1879 to 1940; he worked very hard until the day he died and he began young. He worked in many styles. It is quite possible to point out a dozen kinds of painting as distinctively Klee

His earliest work shows German romanticism at the end of its rope, as indeed it was. A few years later Klee is a kind of middle European Aubrey Beardsley. There is a period of heavy satire in purely conven-

tional style. In the early years of this century his work shows visual echoes of the medieval fantastic images, and from this point Klee departs, disarmingly, in several directions; he was successful and charming in all these directions.

Klee turned from one surface style to another and back again. But there was a constant, the glee and horror, the struck-all-of-a-heap quality, that a child has for experience after experience until the pressure of events convinces him finally of the awful untruth: this is a dull world. It is never dull in Paul Klee. He does not practise the pseudo-infancy that a number of respectable names have gone in for. He followed literally the precept we all ignore; he became as a little child and the kingdom is his.

The book is a gorgeous book. The color plates alone justify the price. The black and whites are everywhere, and this is just as an art book should be. The text offers a full account of the life of the artist and a discussion, in transit, of his work.

Dr. Giedion-Welcker has written sensitively of Klee's work. At times she goes a bit overboard into the jargon of her trade. But she is always keenly aware that the thing to do, really, is to look at the pictures.

FRANK GETLEIN

# THE *Art* OF BEING A *Nobody*

~~~~~ ERIC MANNERS

FOR A GOOD many years I have had the same family doctor. If you were to ask me why I respect him, I suppose I might dredge up several sensible reasons, such as his degrees from universities, his work in research, and so on. They'd be true enough, but I doubt if they'd be the real reason. The real reason for my respect, I rather think, lies in what the doctor eats for breakfast. He starts his day with a bowl of cereal on which he places a dollop of ice cream.

Mind you, he doesn't boast about this. He doesn't cultivate and flaunt the thing as an impressive affectation. He just eats that breakfast because that's what he likes to eat for breakfast. He's been doing it for years, and I found out about it only by accident when I made an early call on him one morning.

You and I are fond of a notion that nowadays we are wonderfully independent and emancipated. We're not ruled any more by "Authority," we like to say. No more of that me-

dieval business of being told what to think and what not to think. These days, our story goes, each of us thinks things out for himself. We're on our own. That's what we say to ourselves. Is it true? No, unfortunately, it isn't.

We are today authority-dominated to the point of abjectness. We are handed (and accept) more advice, more counsels as to what is right and what is wrong, more urgings to a docile conformity, more authoritarian They-Says, than any creatures calling themselves free should dream of bearing.

Does that seem to be pitching it too strong? Tell me: What did you think of the doctor's breakfast? Fantastic? Absurd, affected, not-American, "wrong"? There isn't anything wrong about it except its evidence of a quiet-minded temper that used to be called independence, and an almost lost art that used to be called being oneself. There's nothing wrong with the doctor. It's you and I and all the rest of us who

are in danger of going off the rails, or, to put it in a more exact and terrifying way, who are in danger of going *on* the rails — letting ourselves be persuaded onto the confining and directing rails of an endless conformity. Rails are a good thing for a train. They are a bad thing for the human spirit.

There is no counting the publications today devoted entirely to handing us “rules” for rightly forming our characters, rules for dressing right and eating right and speaking right and rightly getting ahead in the world and having marital intercourse at exactly suitable intervals. Even in many of our general periodicals, these “How To” directives have become as much a staple as the masthead. “How To” has been erected into an omnipresent instruction, and we sit around with our mouths open, taking it in, more devoutly than a thirteenth century shepherd ever listened for the latest word from Rome. Budget your time. Correct your posture. See your dentist. Overcome your shyness. Write correct Business English. Do these exercises after forty. Just follow these rules and you too can join a standardized populace in one great gray goo of bumpless similarity.

THAT’S THE WAY it is; and I think it is perilous. I think the time is at hand, if it isn’t suddenly going to turn out to be too late, for a sublime

burst of putting ice cream on our cereal. This is the hour for our finding, in a flash of ancient glory revived, the art of standing in just exactly the posture that comes congenially to us, speaking a language that is the native speech issuing from our own personality, let the Better Business English fall where it may, and having as much or as little marital intercourse as is mutually right for two living, breathing, uniquely individual human beings, making up their own minds out of love and out of the vivid intimacy of here-and-now, not out of the text of a manual. I urge a very old truth: You don’t “form character,” or “get ahead” or even “become more attractive to others” by doing anything so degrading as following a set of instructions. You do it by being somebody; and the somebody for you to be is yourself. If you are ever going to be somebody at all, it can only be by being that. All you can learn by listening to rules and sedulously conforming your life to them is the hideous art of how to be nobody at all.

Think over for a minute the people we have known who have most memorably seemed to have “character.” Think over the ones who have seemed most interesting, most integrated, most truly — at the deep levels — “adjusted” to the astounding adventure of being a conscious, free-willed, creative, ideal-harboring human being under the

sun. How many of these have been bound to the rails of the everlasting orthodoxies of a horrible How-To? How-To says that the right way to get rested is to sleep eight hours a night. Thomas Edison, listening not to How-To but to the direct inner voice of his own personal self and its needs, slept four. A friend of mine who's a physicist sleeps eleven. That's the natural sleep-way for him, and he's much too much of a man to be put off by some small-minded conformist's thinking it's funny.

Eight hours sleep? Hang all that How-To. You're *you*. You have your own unique identity to follow, your own special vision to serve. Follow that star, that dream, follow the *you*; and go right ahead, if it's truly a part of the youthfulness of you, and sleep if you like in a tree. (Charles Waterton, the grand old English naturalist and grander individualist, used to do that every now and then. He said it gave him the right tuning for feeling like a piece of God's creation, along with the chimpanzees and the owls.) How-To would have it that you must polish and adjust your way of speaking so that no infinitive ever gets split and no participle ever dangles and the sound of you becomes indistinguishable from the sound of every radio announcer. Henry Ward Beecher didn't do anything like that. He spoke *his* way. He poured out his heart, and the honest inner-

most stuff of his honest innermost self, and it made him the greatest orator of his day. He was somebody; which is to say he was himself. Sometimes, in the course of it, he used words in an unconventional way, or bent formalities of grammar to his purpose. Once, when he'd done so, a lady came up to him after the sermon and reproved him: "Madam," he said, "I am Henry Ward Beecher. If the English language gets in my way, God help it."

Is your native personality of a rather shy and diffident sort? How-To says you must overcome that. You must conform, so to speak, to standard brass. Young Charles Darwin didn't. He was so shy that he became almost sick when he had to mix in gatherings of more important people. So instead he just went on being Charles Darwin, and followed his star into long lonely contemplations; and he came up with the Theory of Evolution. The non-mixer, by non-mixing, became the most important man and the most sought-after social lion in England.

"They say" . . . "The proper thing" . . . "Experts tell us" . . . "The correct rule is" . . . What sort of Authoritarianism is that, for free men to let it dull their lives into a drearily bullied just-like-everybody-elseness? What do *you* know? What do *you* say? What have you proved to yourself by the honest light of your own mind?

NO MORE How-To, please. No more thinking that the only right way to think is to think like all the thinkers who want to do the thinking for us. We hear a lot, Sundays, about our souls. There remains to be lived the great adventure, seven days a week, of *being* souls—which means being individuals, being spirits with the gift of freedom, being ourselves. Do these exercises after forty? Well, if we've made up our minds that that's the right thing for us, surely. But, if we've decided that it isn't . . . there was once a non-exerciser who got as fat as a buttertub. It didn't seem to prevent his being a worthwhile personality. His name was Thomas Aquinas. Budget your time? If that's the way that's best for you, do it by all means. But if

you find it's better for you to live in a furious blaze of activity for twenty hours at a stretch—if the light you need to light your personal vision comes best from burning a candle at both ends—well, an old friend of mine lived that way, and the self that came of it was a self worth being. She was Edna St. Vincent Millay.

There is a threat in the air, these days, and it seems to me we want to watch out for it. It has already gone dangerously far in having its way with us. It's the threat of our being thought for, ruled, regulated, pushed around, made into Things. There is only one weapon against that. The weapon is our self: your self, my self, the everlastingly unique and incalculable reality that is a human soul.



DOWN TO EARTH:



The Mothers

THERE IS an antique anecdote, recently revived in a speech by Adlai Stevenson, about two militant and dedicated feminists who got involved in some riotous suffragette demonstration and were jailed for disorderly conduct. As the darkness and silence of night descended upon the jailhouse, one of the ladies began to show signs of a weakening of the spirit. "Come, come, now," her colleague rallied her. "Just put your trust in God. *She* will protect us."

This story amuses audiences, or it did when it was new. But its amusement value depends, as we may hardly ordinarily pause to reflect, upon the fact that we of the twentieth century and the West belong to a small local culture, in a particular time, which supposes with all the dumb certainty of the instinctive and axiomatic that God is male. What foundations the universe, in the Christian religion, is a Father. But in uncountable places, and back to times immemorial, it has been believed that the Power at the back of

beyond is best symbolized as a Mother. It is not a God that presides over things, but a Goddess. The Creative Principle, embodied and imaged, is the Great Mother, the world-bearer, the producing womb of all. Self-sufficient, naturally, and so self-fecundating, she stands either above and beyond all maleness altogether, or at most is only — as it were — fringed by gods, waited upon and served by them as tutelaries. No one with even the most casual nodding acquaintance with mankind's multitudinous religions, mythologies and sacred legends can fail to have encountered again and again the White Goddess so learnedly explored by the scholarly poetic mind of Robert Graves.

In parts of the East, a God entirely beyond sexuality, resolving maleness and femaleness in a One, is constructed out of the paired principles of the *yang* and the *yin* — the male and the female — in a dynamic balance which shifts now this way, now that way, in a kind of measured

erotic dance of creativity and stability-in-union. In other places, other constructs. They go all the way from pure Goddessism — Diana, Demeter, Aphrodite, Astarte, whatever poetic shape thought may take — to pure Godism, the Father-Creator, the Father-Ruler, the Father of reward and punishment. But it has been remarked by students of comparative religion that even in the most intransigent Godism — even in those times and places like our own, when the father principle is the only one we may fancy even crosses our minds — the ancient, ancient Goddess has a way of slipping in. Queen of Heaven, Star of the Sea, Lady of the Rocks, Lady of the Snows . . . however carefully priestly manuals may seek to disclaim or delimit the divinity of the so-described, it must be an inexperienced curate indeed who has not found how often, as a matter of popular practice, the Goddess continues to have, as from the beginning, her worshipers.

TO A NATURALIST it seems in no way odd that there should be the Goddess older than the gods, hugely powerful upon human minds, indestructibly persistent. For to examine into the world of nature around us, to become intimately acquainted with the texture and pattern of animal life, is to see femaleness continually ranking over maleness, motherhood over fatherhood, the power of the feminine over the power of the

masculine. It gets to look, in certain moods and moments of contemplation, as though males exist only as a sort of servant, and a periodic necessary fertilization, in a Creation unmistakably under feminine overrule, as by (it might be) Diana the Huntress, with the crescent moon at her shoulder and in her lean, controlling hands the blood-tipped spear.

No naturalist has yet encountered, in his woods, fields or laboratory, an instance of a male animal's begetting a young one without involving a female animal in the creative process. This is so obvious and evident as to sound nearly silly in the stating. What is less obvious and evident, but just as familiar a fact to a naturalist, is that a great many female animals can and do beget young ones without having had to secure any male assistance. A male creature produces seed. But seed is all it is. It never becomes anything else, in any circumstances, except insofar as it is used as a contribution to what an ovum may do. But the ovum, the treasure of the female, can hatch and flower and burgeon into new life without that contribution. As a substitute, in the deprived conditions of the laboratory, the ovum will cheerfully make do (as it were) with just a dab of saline solution. In the case of a good many of the humbler animals, it will respond just to an impersonal tickle with the point of a dissecting knife. In the case of a great many of the

humblest and commonest animals, reproduction goes on for generation after generation, even in the normal wild state, without any male appearing on the scene. Among numbers of the lesser crustacea, for instance, males are so superfluous that no naturalist has ever seen a male among the teeming throngs of these virgin-born animals.

THE COMMON WATER FLEAS, *Daphnia*, that abound in ponds, hatch forth in the spring from eggs that have been dormant over the winter. All the little fleas that leap forth into the glory of the new year are females. Presently they lay eggs — unfertilized eggs — and from these comes a new all-female generation. The fleas give birth and multiply prodigiously all summer, so prodigiously as nearly to clog a pond by fall. All the births are virgin births. All the fleas are females. It is only late in the autumn that there appear, briefly, some male water fleas. These fertilize the eggs which are to lie dormant over the winter and are to resume, in spring, the scarcely male-touched life-cycles of the endless, endless hordes of self-reproducing virgins.

It is so with aphids. It is so, at least optionally, with bees. (From fertilized eggs a queen bee produces other queens, meeting her rank, and worker bees for work. But from unfertilized eggs, in a virgin birth, she produces sporadically those most

negligibly functional of bee-forms, males. A queen bee lives years, and out of her huge feminine fecundity can produce three thousand eggs a day.) Several of the rotifers, the little “wheel animalcules” of common mud puddles and ditchwater, appear to proceed forever, through the infinities of their generations, in successions of virgin births never requiring any interjection at all of maleness into the species-line.

While it is true that among higher animals sexual congress precedes reproduction, it is evident to a naturalist, peering and poking in the primal ooze, that there is no inherent necessity, in life as life, for male presence. Males play their role only, as we may put it, by invitation. If no males existed, or no invitation were extended, the earth could continue to teem with self-reproducing life, in a fecund dance of maidens. It forcibly strikes a naturalist, too, that at those rising life-levels where the invitation does begin to be extended, it is frequently extended only very briefly and only upon terms of death penalty. The behavior of many spiders is generally familiar: how the female invites the male to perform his brief office and then at once kills him. This is a sexual pattern by no means confined to spiders. A scorpion, with arching tail and coquetting prance, secures the service she requires, then forthwith murders. Or take a common praying mantis. Locked in embrace,

the female is irresistibly stimulated to hunger. When she has been fertilized, she does not release the grip of her spiny arms upon her mate. Hugging him tightly, dribbling a dark brown spittle, she presses herself upon him and bites off his head.

To one not a naturalist, it may seem that such instances from insect life and lower forms are hardly significant. After all, it may be said, what about the truly higher creatures, the birds, the mammals? Here, surely, we find the Father heading the family?

But we do not. The busy male wren, darting around our dooryard gathering twigs, may appear to be doing the nest-building. Such is not the case. All he is doing is building "token" nests, little structures with which he hopes to persuade the female. If he does persuade her to let him briefly into her life, it is she who builds the real nest. The most she ever does with his eager little nest is inspect it, appraising it with her bright feminine bird eye even as she appraises the tumult of courtship song he offers. She never finds it usable.

IT MAY come naturally to us to think that among the higher mammals, our most immediate relatives, Father must come into his own. It may seem reasonable to think of daddy rabbit, daddy deer, daddy squirrel, daddy skunk, in

roles of domestic authority. Surely it is Father who trains the youngsters — the boys among them, at any rate — in their hunting skills, their arts of competition and survival? But it is not. It is Mother. Whether in the world of rabbits, deer, skunks or squirrels, it is mother who, once pregnant, drives father out of the house for good and forever, and who is in entire charge of rearing the young, being huntress and killer for them, giving them what education they get to equip them for their lives of wary, self-sufficient wildness. The males of the majority of animals in any stretch of field and forest live lives of homeless solitude, except on those occasions — once a year, twice a year, whatever it may be — when they are suffered to pay briefly, in their biological fashion, their worship to that Goddess who is older than all worlds.

Once upon a time, in the heights of the green mountains, lived Artemis of Arcadia. Her chariot, it was said, was drawn by four stags with golden antlers, and she held in one hand the reins of things and in the other the whip that flicks or flogs them forward. Elsewhere, other times, she has had other names, ridden other vehicles, held a spear or a pack of leashed hounds or a curved knife. It must be an insensitive naturalist who, turning a leaf, peering into a brook pool, climbing the mountains, cannot perceive her still.

PAST AND PRESENT

William Bradford Huie

A Man Named Wilson

This story by the MERCURY's editor first appeared in these pages more than ten years ago. Many things have changed since then — and then again, many thing have not.

YOU NEVER HEARD of Roosevelt Wilson. I never saw him more than twice. But Roosevelt Wilson continues to disturb me. Whenever I try to feel that I am an honest and self-assured supporter of the American Dream, Roosevelt Wilson perches on my shoulder, laughs sardonically, and reminds me that I am just another lousy compromiser; that once when I had my chance to strike a blow in defense of the Great Dream, I turned aside with the Pontius Pilates and whimpered: "What the hell can I do?"

To understand Roosevelt Wilson you'll have to visualize the loneliest, most insignificant human being in the world. The cipher in a social system. He never knew who his mother was. He just appeared as a nameless black brat in a cotton patch. He breathed. He grew. He chopped cot-

ton for bread. He stole. And somebody, somewhere, labeled him Roosevelt Wilson. Think of him as a black, burr-headed creature who didn't feel superior to a hound dog, and whose death would not have brought a waft of regret across any heart in America.

When I first heard of Roosevelt Wilson he was a dog being chased by other dogs. He was a scurrying black animal to be shot on sight and left naked to rot in a ditch and be picked by buzzards. He had raped a white woman in a potato patch at Bug Tussle, and bloodhounds and a posse were chasing him. It is the old familiar fabric to every Southern reporter, so I methodically ground out eight paragraphs on The Chase. And when the black quarry had been captured by a sheriff and "spirited away for safekeeping," I ground out

two editorial paragraphs congratulating the sheriff for preserving Alabama's proud record of not having had a lynching in three years.

When I arrived at the county courthouse to cover the trial, there was nothing unusual about the scene. The AP reporter and I sat in a dysentery parlor across the street, drank coffee, griped about the assignment, and hoped Justice would act swiftly so we could get back to Birmingham before night.

THERE WERE two or three thousand people massed in the streets leading up to the courthouse square. A scattering of sticks and shotguns. Two companies of National Guardsmen had mounted machine guns around the courthouse and an officer with a loudspeaker kept issuing warnings forbidding anyone to cross the street to the courthouse. Only those who had stood in line and obtained tickets for the two hundred seats in the courtroom were allowed to pass into the courthouse, and these — both men and women — were searched for weapons. The scene in the courtroom was usual for such trials. State police and Guardsmen, armed with sidearms and nightsticks, were stationed around the walls and in the aisles.

The jury had been selected when I seated myself at the table which the sheriff had hastened to provide for the two out-of-town reporters. We had not been expected. It was a

routine trial. We would not have been sent to cover it except for a dull news week. The jurors were farmers and townsmen and I observed that they appeared more intelligent than the average Alabama jury. This was because the verdict was a foregone conclusion and thus counsel had not made the usual effort to strike the more intelligent men but had simply taken the first twelve in the venire.

I looked across at the plaintiff. She was a husky, loose-jointed farm woman, perhaps thirty, with big red hands, big feet, and a matted mass of blonde hair which some amateur barber had chopped squarely and roughly off. She reminded me of a gangling battle-ax I had once seen in a brothel whom the Madam used only as a shock trooper to take on the heavier and more bellicose clients who came in very late and very drunk. The two great press services drily agreed that young Roosevelt had shown damn poor taste in his selection of a Queen Bee worthy of his life.

Next to the plaintiff sat her husband, a burly farmer whose cheap clothes were much too small for his bulging muscles and whose flushed face gave evidence of the great rage pent up inside him. Around the two sat an imposing array of counsel for the state. The Attorney General himself was on hand, his hackles up, and issuing brash statements by the bucketful. Every elected prosecutor in district and county was present,

with assistants and volunteers, to see that swift justice was done. Such a case provides rare political opportunity, and every attorney who plans to run for office rushes in to participate gratis in the prosecution and make a hell-raising speech to the jury.

You had to look at counsel for the defense to appreciate the contrast. These two lawyers had been appointed by the Court, their names drawn from a box containing a list of all practicing members of the bar. Fate had frowned on poor Roosevelt again. For he had drawn a couple of old men who had no stomach for trial procedure. They were in mortal fear the populace would get the idea that they had willingly taken Roosevelt's case and that they believed him innocent. Before the trial began, one of them rose and addressed the Court.

"Your Honor," he stammered, "to avoid any misconceptions here, my colleague and I would like you to explain publicly that we have been drafted by the Court to safeguard the constitutional rights of the defendant and that no sympathy for this defendant is implied by our actions."

This the judge did solemnly in the presence of the jury. But still the old fuddy-duddies weren't satisfied. They came over to us and requested we make clear in our stories that they were appearing only in compliance with constitutional require-

ment. The judge, a grayish politician of about sixty, tried nervously to rush the procedure. He wanted the trial over and the defendant safely back in state prison by nightfall.

THERE WAS a rumble in the courtroom. The big coppers and the Guardsmen hefted their nightsticks. You could feel the hackles rise and the hate charge the air. The defendant was trudging in with an escort of troopers. I gave him an unconcerned and half-amused glance and jotted down a note. Barefooted. Faded and patched pair of blue overalls and jumper. Hundred and thirty pounds. Five feet six. Burr-headed bastard. The troopers handcuffed him to a chair directly in front of us. With the trial about to start, his attorneys spoke contemptuously to him. It was the first time, apparently, that they had seen him.

"What's ya' name, boy?"

"Ruseyvelt Wilson."

"How old are ya?"

"Ah thinks ah's twenty-two."

Then they sat back and were ready. They assumed the defendant had no witnesses and that he should be pleaded not guilty so as to be certain of the death penalty.

The state called the plaintiff and recorded her story. Her husband had been off working in another county. While she was digging potatoes in one of the more remote fields, the nigger had sneaked out of the thicket and accosted her with a shotgun. He

had threatened to kill her if she didn't go into the thicket and submit to him. So, with a choice between death and such a sacrifice, she had complied with his demands. After he had run off, she had heard the yells of some women looking for her, and she had rushed to them and reported the crime.

The defense cross-examined softly and sympathetically. "Not that we doubt your story, ma'am," they explained, "but just for the record." The plaintiff agreed that the nigger had laid down his gun before the rape occurred, but the judge promptly explained to the jury that she had already been intimidated with the gun and was thus in mortal fear for her life even though the gun had been cast aside. The irreverent AP cocked an eyebrow and shook his head. The plaintiff weighed a good thirty pounds more than the defendant and could obviously have smacked him silly when he laid the gun down.

Then followed a succession of witnesses who established that the defendant had run when approached by the posse, that he carried the gun, and that he had resisted arrest. Two women testified to the nervous state of the plaintiff after the crime.

AT THE NOON RECESS I overheard a conversation between Roosevelt and his attorneys. They were telling him that there would be no need for him to take the stand, that

it would be best just to submit the case when the state closed. But Roosevelt objected.

"Naw, suh, boss," he said. "De truf ain't being tole heah. Ah got to git up deah an' tell de truf. Ef dey kills me, ah got to git up deah an' tell de truf."

Believe me, it was no noble motive which inspired my intervention. I only wanted to blow up a dull story. I stepped up and said: "That's right, Roosevelt. If they're not telling the truth, you get up there and tell it. They've got to listen to you." The lawyers then admitted to him that "of course, the Court couldn't deny him his constitutional right to testify in his own defense," but his testimony would do no good. When they had gone, I stepped back in and gave Roosevelt some more encouragement.

"Get in there and give it to them straight, Roosevelt," I said. Then, in that burr-headed nigger's face, I saw something I didn't want to see. I must have been the first white man ever to have spoken a civil word to him. He reacted like a dog when you pat him on the head. He let down his guard and I saw that he wasn't a nameless animal but a living, breathing, feeling — even aspiring — person. He showed me all the loneliness and fear of his wretched life. The loneliness of the cotton patch and a dog howling under the moon. The loneliness and fear of the swamp with bloodhounds baying. The lone-

liness and fear of a jail cell and a thunderbolt exploding in your body. I shrugged and turned away quickly.

Shortly after noon the state rested and defense counsel rose to inform the Court solemnly that counsel had advised the defendant not to testify, but that he insisted on his constitutional right. The defense, therefore, was calling the defendant, Roosevelt Wilson, to the stand. If you had struck a match while that nigger was walking to the stand, the courtroom would have exploded. I have never felt such tension, such organized hate focused on one insignificant object. Troopers clutched their nightsticks and the judge unconsciously rapped for order though the room was breathlessly silent.

"Now, Roosevelt, just go ahead and tell your story," defense counsel said. "And make it short." There was no effort to guide his testimony or to help him in any way.

"Well, jedge, it wuz lak dis," he began. "Ah got up dat mawnin' an' ah borrh'd Sam Winson's gun to go rabbit-huntin'. Ef Sam wuz heah he'd tell ya ah did. Ah went ovah tow'd de nawth fawty an' ah seed dis lady a-diggin' taters. Ah'd seed her a time o' two befo' an' she'd tole me she wanted a ring ah had. Ah wawked up to her an' ah show'd her de ring an' we tawked a minute. Den ah axed her de question an' she lukked aroun' an' said she wuz willin'. . . ."

The room exploded. In a split

second the husband had yanked open his britches and from somewhere under or between his legs had come up with a forty-five. And he had come up shooting. The crowd rioted and the Guardsmen began laying them in the aisles with the nightsticks. Two big troopers jumped on the hate-crazed husband and wrested the gun from him. Two reporters who had been standing up, the better to hear Roosevelt's story, had done a dual jackknife under a table.

IT WAS HALF AN HOUR before order could be restored. The jury, the husband, and the defendant were removed from the courtroom, and AP and I began burning up the wires with flashes. I asked the judge if he wouldn't have to declare a mistrial. "I suppose I should," he said, "but, hell, we've got to get rid of this mess." He looked as if he were bothered by an offensive odor.

I went in to see Roosevelt, and his lawyers were upbraiding him. "We told you so. We told you not to get up there. Now you see we were right. When Court goes back in session, we'll just close the case."

"Now, suh, boss," Roosevelt objected. "Ah's jest got started good De whole truf ain't been tole yit."

By now Roosevelt had me pulling for him. "Get back up there, Roosevelt," I told him. "Don't let 'em scare you. Tell it all."

When trial was resumed, the de-

fense apologized profusely and explained again that they had urged the defendant not to testify. Then they moved for a mistrial. The motion was denied and Roosevelt went back to the stand, completely surrounded by troopers. In a deadly silence broken by heavy breathing, he finished the story of a mutual pine-needle affair, hastened near the end by "some women hollerin' fo' dis lady."

The cross-examination thunder began to roll. The prosecutors began jumping and yelling and shaking their fists.

"If you hadn't committed a crime," the Attorney General belted, "why did you run like a scared rabbit when these men found you over there in that field?"

The reply was cool. "Ah seed a buncha men come a-runnin' at me. Dey wuz a-cussin' an' a-shootin'. So ah jest run. Dey kept a-chasin' me, so ah kept runnin'."

For an hour the state battery took turns working out on Roosevelt. They attempted to cross him in every way. But his story never changed. The woman had gone to the woods with him willingly in exchange for the ring he had given her.

During the impassioned oratory to the jury, I convinced myself that the woman — the plaintiff — had smuggled the gun into the courtroom. The husband could hardly have brought it in, for he was the most suspect of all the spectators and

two deputies had searched him thoroughly. But the matron admitted her search of the woman had been perfunctory. The plaintiff had known the story the nigger might tell and she had brought the gun in to have her husband kill him before he could tell it.

The jury required four minutes to go out, organize, and bring back death. While it was out, I whispered to the judge: "Judge, I've lived around niggers all my life and if I ever heard one tell the truth, that little bastard was telling it this afternoon, wasn't he?" The judge crouched down low behind his desk, nodded his head, and grinned: "By God, he shore was, wasn't he?"

When the jury had been discharged, I spoke privately to several of the jurors. To each one I made the same statement I had made to the judge. In each case I got the same reply. "Shore he was telling the truth. But what the hell, he deserves the chair for messin' around with a white woman. Besides, if we'd turned him loose, that crowd outside would'a lynched us. We gotta live with these folks."

After the troopers had rushed Roosevelt through the crowds and away toward the penitentiary, the judge called the husband back to reprimand him for creating a disturbance, not to mention attempting to murder a man still presumed to be innocent. The husband told the judge:

"Judge, I felt like I had to kill that sonuvabitch. I intended to do it this mawnin' while he wuz a-settin' over there at the table. But ever' time I'd reach down to pull my gun, the Lawd would tell me not to do it fo' them two newspapermen wuz a-settin' right smack behind him.

"Whew!" AP had turned white around the gills. "We got something to thank the Lord for, haven't we, boy?" he said.

AS WE RODE BACK to Birmingham that night, I kept thinking of Roosevelt Wilson in his faded overalls and bare feet, riding alone toward Death Row with a hundred and twenty Guardsmen to see him safely in the chair. I thought of Pontius Pilate. I thought of Emile Zola and the few men who have had the courage to defy the mob. I sneered. What the hell! AP pulled in toward a roadhouse. "Let's have a drink," he said.

We had several drinks. We told the waitress some stories and pinched her on the thigh. To hell with Roosevelt Wilson. Smart guys don't go around butting their heads against stone walls. Smart guys make the most of the inevitable.

Next morning, in my clean-up story, I inserted two paragraphs about Roosevelt's testimony. In polite language I hinted at its substance. I watched the managing editor when he picked up the story at the copy desk. He looked over at

me, made a wry face, and jerked his nose to tell me it stank. I saw his pencil go down in an impatient gesture, and I knew those two paragraphs would never see print. No one reading my story could have guessed on what claim Roosevelt based his plea of innocence. I suggested we use a picture of Roosevelt Wilson with the story. His face might impress somebody with his innocence. But my paper, like others in the South, had a policy against using pictures of Negroes. So we used the latest piece of Marlene Dietrich leg art instead.

I wish I could tell you that the Case of Roosevelt Wilson perched on my shoulder like a raven, and that I never rested until I had freed him from his cell and thrown him back into the faces of the Pontius Pilates. I wish I could tell you that I made a brave speech to the editor of my paper; that I flung my job in his face; and that I fought for Roosevelt's freedom with pamphlets printed on a hand press. But none of these things happened. I told the editor the filthy facts and suggested a further story, but when he said, "Hell Bill, you're crazy," I nodded and said, "Yeah, I guess you're right."

I told the Governor the same filthy facts. He shrugged and said: "Boy, you're crazy. What the hell can I do? You know what it would mean if I intervened in a case like this."

"Yeah, I guess you're right," I

said. "But you know I've read of governors who couldn't sleep after they had let an innocent man go to his death."

He laughed. I laughed, too. The kind of laugh you laugh to keep from crying. Then — incredible as it seems — I forgot Roosevelt Wilson and it was quite by accident that I ever saw him again.

THURSDAY NIGHT is execution night at Alabama's big Kilby Prison. Most every week the state fries some black meat and occasionally a little white meat is thrown in for good measure. There was a young cop-killer sent up from Birmingham. He was a white boy from somewhere out West. He had been in the Marines and had hit the highways. He had gone jittery during a holdup and plugged a cop. We had played the case with a lot of sob stuff and I was sent down to Montgomery to cover his burning.

The warden was impatient. "Come on, you guys, let's get started," he said to the reporters. "We got eight black boys to burn after we finish off this yellow cop-killer."

The cop-killer was yellow all right. There were six preachers with him when they brought him into the death house — all anxious to get their names spelled right — but he went hysterical and guards had to throw him in the chair.

I had filed my story and was ready to leave the prison when I remem-

bered I had left my coat in the corridor near the death house. I went back for it and just happened to notice the black boy who was being led toward the green door.

It was Roosevelt Wilson.

In his white prison clothes the burr-headed little bastard looked smaller and less significant than he had looked in his overalls. Friendless and alone, he was going to his death. During his weeks of waiting he had not had a single visitor nor communication from the world outside. His eyeballs were rolling in fear, but he was walking without support. I tossed down my coat and called to the warden to wait a minute.

"You're Roosevelt Wilson, aren't you?" I said. "The boy from up in Webster County." He recognized me. I was still probably the only white man who had ever spoken civilly to him. "Yassuh, boss, ah is. And yo're de newspapah genmun who wuz at mah trial, ain'tcha?"

The warden was annoyed. "Come on, Huie," he snapped. "We're in a hurry. We got three more to go and it's gettin' late." But I insisted and he reluctantly agreed to take another nigger on and get Roosevelt last. He locked us back in the cell and we had a few minutes to talk.

"Roosevelt, would you like to see a preacher before you go?" I asked him.

He said he would, so I called an attendant and sent him for a preacher. But the only preacher

around now was a nigger preacher and he was in the death house. So I borrowed a greasy little Testament from an old white prisoner on the Row. I couldn't remember a suitable passage in the New Testament, so I opened the little Bible, pretended I was reading, and recited the last five verses of the Twenty-third Psalm. Roosevelt repeated after me.

I FUMBLE for something to say to that Negro boy. I wanted to say something that would give him faith and comfort and hope. Something he could understand. Finally, I said: "Roosevelt, before you go in there, I want to say this to you. You are not guilty of the crime for which this state is going to kill you. All of us who heard your story know that you are innocent. The judge knows you are innocent. The jurors know you are innocent."

"Den why is dey killin' me, boss? Fo' God, ah didn't fo'ce dat lady."

"I know you didn't. We all know you didn't. But we couldn't help it."

"Is dey killin' me jest fo' messin' aroun' wid day lady?"

"Yes, that's one reason. And there's a bigger and more awful reason that I haven't time to explain. But what you want to do now is to buck up. Everybody has to die. It's not bad in there. You never feel it at all. So don't be afraid."

He thought for a minute. "Does ya reckon ah'll go to Hebben, boss?"

"Well, Roosevelt," I answered, "I've heard it said that the folks here on earth who are done wrong like you, and the folks who have the worst luck — they are the folks who go to Heaven, and they are the ones who get the biggest crowns and the most gold. So I think you deserve to go there and I believe you will."

"Thank ya, boss," he said. The warden was coming, and he turned and asked: "Will ya go in wif me, boss? It won't be so bad ef ya'll go wif me."

God, I hated to go back in there. It always made me sick. But I nodded. My folks don't shake hands with Negroes, but I took Roosevelt by the hand and we walked down the corridor. An old white-headed Negro preacher joined us.

You would have been proud of Roosevelt in the death house. He was scared, but there were no hysterics. At the chair he turned around and said: "G'bye, boss. G'bye, parson." The attendants clapped on the hood and adjusted the electrodes and the old preacher broke into "I am the Resurrection and the Life. . . ." For a second, the frail form quivered in the chair, and then the sovereign State of Alabama exploded twenty-three hundred volts of lightning.

They buried him in the prison plot for unclaimed bodies. My paper ran a story under my by-line. It was a stinking account of the execution of a yellow cop-killer. "I have found

God!" he was quoted as having said to the reporter before the switch was thrown. The last paragraph of the story was inconsequential. It would have been killed by the newspaper man had it run over the column. It said: "Among the eight Negroes also executed last night was Roosevelt Wilson, 22, convicted of rape in Wilcox County."

Perhaps in retrospect I attach too much significance to this story of Roosevelt Wilson. It is a sordid story involving only an unfortunate woman and a black maverick. Of the score of interracial rape trials I have covered, it is not typical because the innocent defendant is the exception rather than the rule. But an innocent man went to his death.

It is apparent, then, that the cases of the Roosevelt Wilsons involve

more than plaintiffs and defendants. They involve the faith and the hope and the courage of a nation. Small wonder that we have such difficulty rousing the Great Soul of America for its own defense. Small wonder that we can't project our dreams through the clouds of our own cynicism and behold a vision worth dying for. We are all soul-sick in America. It is a what-the-hell sickness compounded of cynicism and disillusion.

Who knows? Perhaps some day when we have regained the American Vision for ourselves and given it to others, we may erect a monument to Adolf Hitler. And when I have atoned for my own complacency and what-the-hell, I think I'll erect a monument to a barefooted black boy named Roosevelt Wilson.

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